

The

ENGLISH HOME



Celebrating the essence of English style

January 2016 | Issue 131 | £4.10 | UK Edition

NEW YEAR HONOURS

We reveal our annual edit of buys that deserve a place in your house

Create & convert

Chic barn conversion

Georgian-inspired manor

Timber-framed new build

DESIGN RESOLUTIONS

Annabel Astor, Tricia Guild & Paolo Moschino on how to make braver decorating decisions

Sanctuary at home

• Inviting bedroom ideas • Touchable textures • Winter soul food



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CONTENTS

JANUARY 2016



56



28

Beautiful Buys

12 HOME COMFORTS Metallic tones can be paired with subtle and bold hues for a wonderfully wintry effect.

18 SOFT TOUCH A cosy blanket and a deep rug underfoot are just the ticket for chilly days.

20 TAKE FLIGHT Fabulous feather motifs.

English Homes

28 ALL GOOD THINGS After living in a Portakabin for four years, this homeowner's barn conversion in Kent was well worth the wait.

36 LASTING IMPRESSION With its light and airy interiors, this timber-framed property is a rural idyll.

46 RISING TO THE OCCASION There is never a dull moment on this historic estate, passed down from father to son, with a magnificent Georgian mansion.

56 PRECISION & POETRY A harmonious blend of styles is achieved at this inviting family home in Sussex.

66 AT HOME WITH KATHERINE HOOKER The fashion designer explains what makes a home special.

78



Style Inspiration

69 PALE & INTERESTING Creating a calming, rather than cold, space is key when adopting white schemes.

70 DECORATING RESOLUTIONS Whether decluttering or incorporating bold patterns, we ask the experts for inspirational decorating resolutions.

78 QUIET REFLECTIONS The clever use of mirrors can transform rooms and magnify light and space.

84 CREATING A HOME FROM HOME Heartwarming advice for making guests feel welcome.

91 NEW YEAR HONOURS 2016 From fabrics and furniture to wallpaper and rugs, we celebrate the best designs and collaborations over the past 12 months.

108 IN TOUCH WITH TEXTURE How to use tactile textures for rooms that look and feel good.

117 LITTLE BLACK BOOK Antiques dealer and fabric designer Robert Kime shares his favoured resources.

118 BY DEFINITION: CURTAINING An overview of some essential terminology when dressing windows.

123 OVEN READY Cooking a meal on a state-of-the-art range cooker can be a cordon-bleu experience.

Quintessentially

129 LET IT SNOW A traditional sledge can provide hours of fun, as well as a stylish hallway accessory.

130 SPARKLING EVENING Ensure New Year's Eve celebrations go with a bang and plenty of fizz.

134 A FEAST FOR THE SENSES Enjoy a warming selection of recipes to keep the winter cold at bay.

139 THE ART OF A HOUSEHOLD ANNUAL AUDIT Mrs Minerva takes stock as the new year approaches.

146 AUTHENTICALLY ENGLISH Discover the traditional and elegant designs of David Seyfried furniture.

Regulars

8 A LETTER FROM HOME A welcome from the Editor.

23 NOTEBOOK Our regular monthly digest of people to watch, pursuits to try and places to visit.

137 SUBSCRIBE TO THE ENGLISH HOME Treat yourself or someone to a subscription to *The English Home*.

145 COMING NEXT MONTH & ADDRESS BOOK

118



134



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A letter from home



There is a quiet pause in life as we approach and enter the new year (although hopefully there is a fabulous party too!). Many switch off completely from work, the routines of home-life, the school run, or local commitments, and are able to enjoy a brief interlude to reflect upon the important things in life. Maybe like me, you also start to dream of plans for the year to come.

When the Christmas decorations come down I always find my home feels suddenly a little drab, and inevitably I start to consider a spot of redecoration. I think it is because I look at my rooms with the most critical of eyes when the festive jewels are packed away. But making a resolution to redecorate is so much more fun than vowing to give up chocolate, or sign-up at a gym, that it hardly feels like a new year resolution at all!

This issue, we persuaded respected interior designers to reveal decorative resolutions (page 70) to really focus the mind and ensure that energies are directed toward changes that reap the most effective results. The insights are sage and rather galvanising. I'm already passionate about craftsmanship, try hard to be mindful about sustainability and have a husband who is ruthless with clutter – but I do resolve this year to be more adventurous with pattern, as Paolo Moschino and Philip Vergeylen recommend. I am also delighted to bring you our second annual New Year Honours list. It is a huge task to curate our edit of the most notable interior buys launched in the past 12 months, but we hope you will find great value in our reveal of the products that have most impressed and inspired us and deserve a suitably appropriate recognition.

Wishing a happy 2016 to you all,

Kerry Harp-Cuss, Editor

Behind the scenes

A few insights from The English Home offices...

Katy, our Decorating Editor has been busily visiting launches of new fabric and wallpaper collections for Spring 2016. Look out for her new fabric feature series starting next issue. **Suzanna, our Lifestyle & Shopping Editor** has been gleaning advice from the best party planners in the business as to how to throw a sparkling and memorable New Year celebration (see page 130), and we are also delighted to **welcome two new team members** – Associate Editor Sarah Feeley and Art Editor Frances Wallace – together with all the energy and passion they bring with them.



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HOME *Comforts*

A hint of silver and gold brings a glistening highlight to interiors, beyond the festive season, and can be paired with rich or gentle hues

Dark flavours

Furnishings in dark wood can bring warmth to a room. Here, the warmth is heightened by russet, yellow, red and orange tones. Note, too, how the dining table and chairs have an air of sophistication and drama, ideal for dinner parties. *Stafford dining chair, aged tobacco leather, £290; Charlotte dining table, £1,450; Han Chinese cabinet, £389, all tableware and accessories Oka*



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

Choice of finish

The Versailles bath from Fired Earth has a ready-to-paint exterior, so it can be decorated in any colour, whether to match or beautifully contrast with the surrounding scheme.

Versailles bath, Zephyr metallic, £3,200; classic bath and shower mixer, £1,500; Casablanca Nassim tiles, £27.95 each; walls in Top Hat, £35.50 for 2.5 litres, all Fired Earth

Cosy bed

After a long winter walk in the cold, treat four-legged friends to a soft linen bed. Available in Parisian Blue and Charcoal.

Linen pet bed, Parisian Blue, £85, The Linen Works

Metallic touch

Dress up the hallway with this ornate sideboard. The antiqued white-metal frame has a decorative floral pattern and a black granite top. There are four drawers and two cupboards with faux drawers on the sides.

Provence granite top sideboard, £995, Atkin and Thyme ▶



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Golden light

Reinvigorate the office for the new year with smart desk accessories, such as this sleek light mounted on a slab base. *Leo brass table lamp, £95, Graham and Green*

Toasty mood

There are few patterns that exude the comforting warmth of richly coloured tartan. During winter, heighten the warm visual with textured or tactile cushions in mohair or cashmere.

Skye heritage fabric in Claret, £49.95 a metre, Moon; Bronte mohair cushion in Lacquer Red, £49.95, Bronte by Moon

Shake and stir

Whip up delicious cocktails with professional flair to bring pizzazz to any party or celebration.

Glasses from £36 for a set of four LSA International assorted wine glasses, all tableware and cocktail equipment Amara

Fresh character

With a highly usable soft blue background, this jolly paper would suit a country-kitchen scheme and make a refreshing alternative to the more ubiquitous bucolic designs.

Highland fling wallpaper, £99 a roll, Juliet Travers ▶





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE

Carry all

This smart trug could provide guests with essential bathroom toiletries or foodie treats from the local area. For more guest-room ideas, see our feature on page 84. Trug, 29cm x 23cm, £35, *The Dormy House*

Rustically aged

Sleek furnishings may look rather out of place in period properties or country schemes. With that in mind, this double armoire has aged-glass mirrors and a textured mango-wood frame.

Gabriella wardrobe, £1,200, *Graham and Green*

Shapely combination

Ring in the new year with painted views that will inspire throughout the year. This collection of ten watercolour prints is taken from interior designer Nina Campbell's great-great uncle's artwork, and has been produced in collaboration with the Trowbridge Gallery.

Set of ten Trowbridge Gallery Keightley framed prints, edition of 195, £2,100, *Nina Campbell* ■



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Mr Woolly cushion, £47.50, Cotswold Trading



Hand-knitted Mimi Hat, £40, Elen Angharad



Curtain in Wolf linen/polyester mix, £125 a metre; grey cover in Weather Web linen, £112.50 a metre; cream throw in Samurai, £100 a metre; bouclé cashmere throw, £2,175, all de Le Cuona



St James taupe stool, £130, Sweetpea & Willow



Green Geo knit cushion, £45, Royal Academy Shop



Blanket-stitched brushed cotton throw, £69.50, Ian Mankin

SOFT TOUCH

Chill winds, sharp frosts and dark, winter nights all conspire to add to the attractions of an indoor life, lending cosy knits and soft, tactile textures an added seasonal allure. So unless you absolutely have to go out, why not give in to temptation: stoke up the fire, immerse yourself in a good book or box set, turn up the heat and envelop yourself in luxurious cashmere, strokable velvets and snugly knits.

Scandi Fair Isle Yoke jumper, £79, Hambro & Miller



Eltham Chair in Deco Velvet, £749, Marks & Spencer



Dahlia Medium Storage Box, £119, Swoon Editions

Sara zig zag rug, £300, Luku Home



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Tawny wallpaper from the Memento collection, £79.90 for a 10m roll, Linwood



Robin 8cm wall-perched bird, £90, Guy Bird



British cast-bronze handmade door knob (NS1002), from £318.60 each, The Beardmore Collection



Duck-feather and glass coasters, round or square, from £45 for a set of six, Wingfield Digby

TAKE FLIGHT

With their amazing colourful plumage, markings and shapes, birds in their natural habitat are an utter joy to observe. It is these characteristics, with their interesting textures and hues, that also provide delightful adornments for the home. Bird and feather motifs continue to be a recurrent theme in interiors collections and suit a variety of rooms, whatever their style and whatever the season.



Orange Feathers cushion by Karen Miller at Doris Brixham, £29, Not on the High Street



Bird and Nest teacup and saucer, £32, Melody Rose



Airmail correspondence set, £14.99, Chase and Wonder



Carolyn platter, £225, Ralph Lauren Home at Amara



Wild Feather embroidered napkins, £46 for set of four, Oka



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at sea

Chalk July 2016 in your diary because that's the date the new ship from Regent Seven Seas Cruises, Seven Seas Explorer – heralded the most luxurious cruise ship in the world – sets sail on her inaugural season in the Mediterranean.

It will be an exciting moment, the culmination of years of planning by Regent Seven Seas Cruises, a six-star company already well versed in the meaning of luxury. After all, this is the cruise line that brought the world the first all-suite, all-balcony ships and delivers truly all-inclusive prices, from flights and transfers to drinks, gratuities, shore excursions, even Wi-Fi.



But the best just got even better. Seven Seas Explorer might be another all-suite, all-balcony ship but in terms of personal space, and quality of materials and craftsmanship, she will be one of a kind, rivaling the best hotels in the world. For those into numbers, at 56,000 tons, she holds just 750 passengers, which gives a space ratio of 74.6, one of the highest in the industry.

There are lots of amazing new features on Seven Seas Explorer® including a Culinary Arts Kitchen

with 18 individual cooking stations where you can learn to create scrumptious dishes under the guidance of expert chefs. And the Canyon Ranch SpaClub will feature a beautiful infinity-edged plunge pool!

Naturally there is plenty of sumptuous accommodation to choose, from the spacious entry-level Veranda Suites to Park Avenue-styled Master Suites, all kitted out with the quality fittings and furnishings you'd expect from the world's most luxurious ship. Choose a suite at Penthouse level or above and you'll be looked after by a private butler; opt for a Concierge or higher suite and you'll enjoy unlimited free wifi so you can keep in touch with family and friends. Step outside your suite and you'll find many of Regent Seven Seas Cruises' signature dining venues, but all featuring the spectacular new look and feel that really sets this ship apart.

There is certainly something to suit every taste, from succulent steaks and Italian favourites to the delicious multi-course menus served in the Compass Rose main dining room, the ever-popular Prime 7 steakhouse reminiscent of a London private members' club plus, two further new speciality dining options, Chartreuse and Pacific Rim. As befits a luxury ship, the restaurant has an open-seating policy so diners are free to eat when and with whom they wish.

The icing on the cake is that all dining, including the specialty restaurants, is included in the price. But then what else would you expect from the winning combination of a cruise on the world's most luxurious ship with the most-inclusive cruise line in the world.



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Our monthly digest of inside information on people, places and pursuits

PURSUITS

Warm embrace

Sit by the fireside, soothed by the meditative repetition of wool passing through hands and the rhythmic clicking of knitting needles, enjoying seeing your work grow.

Whether part of the new wave or the old guard, revel in the sheer breadth of choice prompted by knitting's renaissance. Natural fibres offer unrivalled feel and warmth. Bluefaced Leicester wool has a lovely lightweight quality, and British Gotland is known for its softness and lustre. Blacker Yarns in Cornwall

(blackeryarns.co.uk) specialises in natural British yarns, and The Little Grey Sheep, based on a small family farm on the Surrey/Hampshire border (thelittlegreysheep.co.uk), produces yarn from its own sheep, which is then hand-dyed on the farm.

When it comes to needles, Knit Pro (in stock at John Lewis) offers an extensive range of luxurious choices in birch, aluminium, carbon fibre and more. With two needles, yarn and some basic skills, the possibilities are endless.

Diary - events worth noting

INSPIRATIONAL IDEAS Being cooped up at home over winter brings into sharp focus the elements that jar, such as the freshly painted room with no finishing touches, or furniture that has seen better days. Head to The Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair in London's Battersea Park for a vast choice of covetable objects. 19-24 January, decorativefair.com



CLEAN COOKING Daylesford Cookery School in the Cotswolds will focus on 'wellness' in January. Courses will include: *Raw Kitchen*; *Relax, Restore, Cleanse*; *Happy Gut*, *Healthy Body*, and *Eat To Be Healthy*. Full day, half-day and evening courses cater for absolute beginners and confident cooks. daylesfordcookeryschool.co.uk

MAKE YOUR MARK Experience the thrill of someone complimenting an object in your home, only for you to reveal that you made it yourself. The Makery in Bath offers fun and friendly 'making' workshops, and in January these include making lampshades, cushions, curtains, Roman blinds, patchwork, an introduction to upholstery, and more. themakery.co.uk

A Good Read



Absolutely Beautiful Things by Anna Spiro (£25, Conran Octopus)

In an uncluttered magnolia world, interior designer Anna Spiro is flying the flag for colourful 'maximalism'. She guides the reader room by room, offering practical advice on how to mix colours, shapes, textures and genres using a layered effect to create uplifting spaces. She urges everyone to have fun with their homes, expressing personality through decor, and proves that, with taste, this approach need not look like a bric-a-brac sale. ▶



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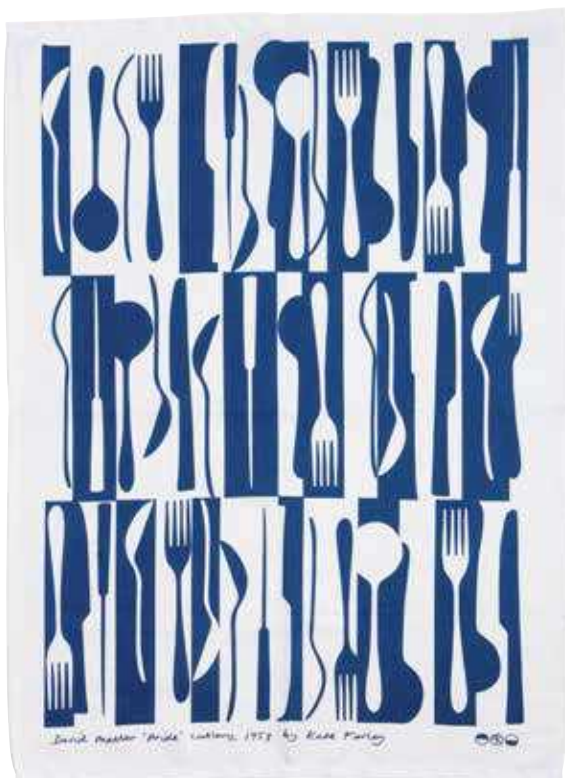
PEOPLE



Kate Farley

Tiptoeing the line between fine art and design, and between paper and cloth, Kate Farley's textiles evoke a strong sense of home. Obsessed with patterns, inspiration can strike this Birmingham-based artist, printmaker and designer whilst admiring rows of cabbages on her allotment or playing a board game that has bold graphics. British heritage, nature and the everyday are recurring themes, and the first fruits of a recent collaboration with Corin Mellor are new tea towels inspired by the cutlery of David Mellor Design.

katefarley.co.uk; davidmellordesign.com



Tom Raffield

Growing up surrounded by the wild beauty of Exmoor instilled Tom Raffield with a sense of adventure and freedom, qualities he now brings to his handmade furniture and lighting. Fascinated by the practice of steam-bending wood, but frustrated by the restrictions of traditional steam chambers, his years of research and experimentation have resulted in spectacular shapes that allow light to pass through the grain. In an age of disposable design, Raffield is proud to champion sustainability and integrity, and products can be bought via his website or John Lewis. tomraffield.com



Martin Brudnizki

The man credited for making many of London's top restaurants sexy is poised to unveil his collaboration with luxury bathroom specialists Drummonds. Martin Brudnizki is the name behind the stylish redesign of Scott's and The Ivy, and his new range for Drummonds heralds a more contemporary direction. Decorex visitors were treated to an exclusive preview of four pieces from the new range: the Tyburn bath, the single and double Ladybower vanity basin, the Derwent bathroom lights and the Derwent mirror. Their simple, architectural aesthetic nods to tradition whilst exploring new materials and contemporary ergonomic forms. These four items recently went on sale, with a range of taps designed by Brudnizki to be unveiled later this year. drummonds-uk.com; mbds.com ►

PLACES



The Headland

Instead of lamenting the wild winter weather, why not rejoice in it? Witness the full fury of powerful weather systems rolling in off the Atlantic from the luxury of a four-poster bed, without getting your hair wet. Perched on a clifftop in north Cornwall, The Headland hotel is offering special storm-watching breaks until late March, with guests snuggling up in its five-star award-winning cottages whilst watching giant waves crashing on the rocks. When the weather breaks, venture out to explore near-deserted beaches, rugged clifftops and moors. Book a three-night break and receive a complimentary dinner at the hotel or a spa treatment per person.

headlandhotel.co.uk

The Pipe and Glass Inn

In the fifteenth century, visitors to Dalton Hall in East Yorkshire were offered hospitality and lodgings at the gatehouse. Today, both are still offered on the same spot, now occupied by The Pipe and Glass Inn, named national Dining Pub Of The Year in 2015. Part of the building dates back to the seventeenth century, and a complete refurbishment in 2006 has retained a cosy country pub feel.

Awarded a Michelin star in 2010, which it has retained every year since, it was recently voted in the top three best gastropubs in Britain. Feast on roast breast of guinea fowl or slow-cooked shoulder of lamb, and enjoy a stay in the inn's luxury suites.

pipeandglass.co.uk



Buckingham Palace State Room Tours

Royal treasures and opulence await as HM The Queen invites visitors behind the velvet rope for exclusive guided tours of the State Rooms at Buckingham Palace. January marks the last chance for a fascinating tour of these rooms, where The Queen and members of the Royal Family receive and entertain guests on state, ceremonial and official occasions. Furnished with some of the greatest treasures from the Royal Collection, and with expert guides bringing history to life, these rooms are a delight to explore

royalcollection.org.uk ■

FEATURE SARAH FEELEY PHOTOGRAPHS P23 (MAIN) AJLATANI/ SHUTTERSTOCK P26 (BOTTOM) ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST/ © HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II 2015

ARTISANS AND ARTISTS

INTERIOR DESIGN



Bespoke kitchen featuring brushed oak cabinetry, stone composite surfaces, Pearl Ashes Aga, bespoke Venetian settle, African salt sculptures, Fortuny lighting, French antique holy water font, antique Indian inlaid table.

One of a kind interior design



A French Louis XV
desk sits beneath
an inherited
18th-century
Chippendale mirror
in the entrance hall.

ALL GOOD THINGS

A charming barn conversion in Kent has proven to be an
inviting home worthy of the time and energy involved

FEATURE JILL SHEARER PHOTOGRAPHS DAVID MEREWETHER STYLING MAXINE BRADY





Most of us would probably recoil in horror at the idea of spending four years living in a Portakabin in the middle of a muddy field, but Caroline and Willy Everett are made of sterner stuff. “I really, honestly did not mind it,” Caroline insists. “We had a tiny bathroom and loo and the rest was just one open space with a sink, a cooker and a fridge. Willy works in London, so he would be away during the week, so I used to pull out the sofa bed at night and plonk myself on it. I had a round table and used to give dinner parties for ten in there.”

Once inside the converted barn, with its honey-coloured beams and walls hung with gilt-framed mirrors and handsome oil paintings, that long feat of endurance is not quite so difficult to understand. This is most definitely a home worth waiting for. Comforts are here in abundance – from the cosiest of sitting rooms to the magnificent seventeenth-century oak staircase and gallery, the barn exudes warmth and repose. Handsome Georgian furniture and cossetting textiles line the rooms, whilst a majestic hall with a soaring, beam-lined roof greets visitors when they arrive.

The Everetts bought the barn in 2004 from a couple they already knew. The wife had recently lost her father, and the will dictated that the estate was to be

divided between her and her brother. “It was a question of either selling the whole estate, which they didn’t want to do, or dividing up the land,” Caroline explains. The seventeenth-century barn already had planning permission, and the Everetts just happened to be looking for a new home in the area, so they made an offer for the property along with 15 acres.

“It was just a big empty space that had been used for livestock,” remembers Caroline. “The barn had planning permission, but the plans divided up the main area into lots of little rooms, and it seemed such a shame to break up what could be such a wonderful entertaining space. So we applied to amend them.” Since this entailed new structural calculations and the need for steels, the couple had to consult an engineer. This all took time, and by the time the revised planning permission was approved, the builder Caroline wanted to use was involved in another job. “So we just had to wait,” remembers Caroline.

The original barn was built with three bays, to which various outshots had been added over the years, including small lean-to arrangements for housing lambs or calves, which farmers built on in an ad-hoc fashion. The plans allowed the Everetts to build up to the roof in one of the bays, leaving the other two as an open-plan, full-height space. The building was listed, however since it had huge entrances both front and ►

ABOVE The green chesterfield sofa is a relatively recent addition and came from Hayward upholsterers in Hastings, which also upholstered the other sofa, bought several years previously.

OPPOSITE Sofas are arranged around an inviting woodburning stove, which was bought from Woodstock Fires in Heathfield.



The walls are painted in a sunny buttermilk colour, which is punctuated by beams of delicious, mellow honey tones

ABOVE The kitchen cabinets are from Appledore and feature a pitch pine worktop. These are complemented by a dresser from Wishbarn Antiques, located in Rye.

back, where the horse-drawn carts would have driven in to unload the corn, the planners allowed these to be glazed, ensuring plenty of light inside.

Throughout the barn, the walls are painted a sunny buttermilk colour, which is punctuated by beams of delicious, mellow honey tones. "I wanted to enhance that feeling of light and space," Caroline explains. "I'm terribly light-sensitive. People make such a fuss about colour, but within a spectrum, I really don't think you notice the colour once the house is furnished." Upstairs, the bedrooms – although modest in size – are inviting and cosy, whilst the attic, with its steeply sloping roof spaces, has created the perfect dormitory for visiting grandchildren.

"The honey-coloured beams were a gift," adds Caroline. "The fantastic thing about old oak is that

it's as hard as nails and never chips or needs repainting, we didn't need to do any stripping, wire-brushing or rubbing down – they are just as nature made them."

Furnishing the barn, of course, brought its own challenges. Once the building work was done, Caroline had the task of installing the family furniture, which had been stored in containers whilst the couple were living in the Portakabin. "When I married Willy, I married a fair amount of furniture and pictures," Caroline laughs. "In a normal house, with lots of walls and rooms, this would have been a privilege, however, in an ancient barn with pretty much just one large, open space and hundreds of beams standing proud of the plaster, it became a huge jigsaw puzzle." But with patience and characteristic practicality, she found a ►



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

In the dining area, Caroline paired the bespoke table with an early pine bench. Caroline Everett, at home.

A charming rocking horse has been given a new lease of life after being salvaged from a skip.

The wonderful rustic country aesthetic in the kitchen and dining area is further heightened by the barn's exposed beams.





A treasure trove of second-hand finds are dotted throughout the barn. Try Melody Maison for similar painted furniture.



place for each antique piece, whilst large family oil paintings were balanced on sturdy beams, where they now look perfectly at home. "It is interesting how elegant Georgian furniture can sit easily and harmoniously in what is essentially a rough, old agricultural building," Caroline observes. "We would never have believed it."

This festive season, the barn will be filled with music and chatter; Caroline and Willy are hosting a 'moving carol service' with the choir of the village church, in which Caroline sings. "We will sing carols on the gallery, whilst everyone listens down below, then I will take the choir off to another venue in the village and the drinks party will go on here."

The sociable couple clearly make the most of their convivial home, with lots of gatherings and dinner parties amongst the friends they have made here.

"This rough old agricultural building, which we wrested from sheep and cattle after 400 years, really does make a very agreeable house," Caroline comments. "Many of my friends are just beginning to downsize now their children have grown up, but the minute you downsize, you give up all that entertaining space. The barn works wonderfully from that point of view; we've downsized in terms of our bedrooms - our bedrooms are now quite modest - but we still have a lovely entertaining space, which we really enjoy." ■

ABOVE The decorative bed throw was purchased from a carpet shop in Pimlico, London. For similar Aubusson rugs, try Alton Brooke or The Rug Company. The elegant bedside table is French, but similar styles can be found at Sweetpea & Willow or The French Bedroom Company.

RIGHT A newly-acquired cabinet in the spare bedroom makes a handy linen closet. It was bought from a French furniture importer's shop in Hurst Green. Find models akin to this from The French Bedroom Company.



Jane has created an elegant sitting room in a pale colour palette, adding touches of glamour such as the gilded mirror above the fireplace. The antique bureau is from Richard's antiques saleroom, RG and RB Williams.



Lasting impression

Updating this new-build property over the years, Jane and Richard Williams have created a light and spacious home

FEATURE AND STYLING ANN BROAD PHOTOGRAPHY COLIN POOLE







ABOVE "Alan Longville from Trefurn designed a more modern kitchen for me, with a four-oven Aga, which is a joy," says Jane. The Stanley pendant shades are from Holloways of Ludlow.

RIGHT "An extension has given us a great space where we can cook, eat and entertain," says Jane.

LEFT Antique furniture combined with contemporary pieces creates a relaxed feel in Jane's sitting room.

The bucolic landscape of Herefordshire with its rolling hills and far-reaching views of the misty Black Mountains in the distance is gorgeous at any time of year, but it is particularly magical in winter. Jane and Richard Williams' beautiful timber-framed house – which emanates a rich, golden glow with its roaring fire, flickering candles and table dressed for a sociable lunch – looks completely at home here, nestling as it does within the embrace of a generous garden. Being surrounded by a variety of established trees and hedges of beech, box and yew, gives the impression that the house has graced the landscape for many years, so it is hard to believe that the property was completed just 23 years ago.

Richard, a local land agent and auctioneer, was looking for a larger property with land, when he noticed a two bedroomed, stone cottage for sale, with ►





Jewel tones along with velvet, wool and faux fur, create a sumptuous scheme in the snug



ABOVE Jane planted shrubs close to the house to give weight and maturity to the newly-built property.

TOP An antique Welsh food cupboard provides the ideal storage for Jane's china and glass in the dining room. Daphne floor lamp with Fez shade in Ikat, by Porta Romana, from Samantha Thomas Design.

several dilapidated outbuildings, 32 acres of pastureland and magnificent views across the Herefordshire landscape.

"The original intention was to extend the cottage," explains Jane. "But after consultation with an architect, it was decided that the best course of action was to consider building a new house on the site."

The couple applied for planning permission to demolish the existing cottage and outbuildings in favour of a new build. At the time, local company Border Oak had started constructing timber-framed properties in the county, and Jane and Richard were struck by the attractiveness of the design, which they felt worked sympathetically within the Herefordshire landscape. "Richard was very interested in building a property in this style," remembers Jane, "so we submitted plans. However, initially, the planners were unsure." The couple stuck to their guns, and after a long period of negotiation, planning consent was finally granted. Work began in June 1990 and it took two years from the initial planning stages to

completion, with a number of restrictions imposed. "In particular, we had to reduce the overall size of the build," Jane explains. "The room sizes are therefore restricted, and this has sometimes made choosing furniture challenging, because each piece has to be carefully considered to make sure the proportions are correct. As a result, I would say, we have underfurnished to compensate."

The design of the garden has been challenging and time-consuming for the couple. Creating a planting scheme that would take into account the sloping nature of the land and provide the anchor to the newly built house was crucial. "Although the bare bones were laid down over twenty years ago, numerous tweaks and alterations have been made as areas fade with age and time," says Jane. "It is an ever-changing picture and luckily one that I enjoy, as I have been very involved with the development of the garden as well as the interior of our home."

Jane used to run her own fashion business and still has a keen interest in colour and design. "We have ►



The curtains in the snug are in Boheme Vert, by Manuel Canovas, and the footstool is in Ancient velvet by Mulberry. The sofa is in Curzon velvet, with Orissa velvet cushions, by Zoffany.



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ABOVE Large velvet headboards make a strong design statement in the guest bedroom. Jane chose Langdale velvet, by GP & J Baker for a soft luxurious touch. The curtains are in Pasillo, by Jane Churchill, all from Samantha Thomas Design.

LEFT The entrance hall is enlivened with a garland wound around the banisters, studded with baubles and freshly picked garden foliage.



made many changes to the interior over the years, she recalls. "To live in the same house for so long does mean that you have the chance to enjoy your surroundings and consider new and exciting updates to the interior along the way." It was 15 years ago that the couple extended the existing kitchen to include a large dining area. A games room was also added along with a conservatory. Since then, the kitchen has been completely redesigned and new bespoke cabinets fitted, as well as an Aga and new appliances.

"I am very fortunate to have my great friend and interior designer, Samantha Thomas to advise me with the more recent design decisions," says Jane. "I trust her, and luckily we have very similar taste – vital for any working relationship with an interior designer. My aim was to refresh the rooms with new fabrics, soft muted colours and elegant lighting, whilst retaining the antique pieces of furniture I have collected over the years."

Jane and Richard have two children, Ted, 15, and Coralie, 12. Both are away at school but love coming home to their newly refurbished bedrooms. "Samantha sourced the soft furnishings and we installed new ►



The original intention was to extend an existing cottage, but it was decided to build a new house on the site instead

ABOVE In the master bedroom, the bedlinen and cable-knit throw are by The White Company. The bedside chests are antique pot cupboards from RG and RB Williams auction salerooms. The walls are painted in Fresco, by Rose of Jericho, and the chandelier is by Fritz Fryer.

wardrobes for extra storage, so they have no excuse to be untidy!" Jane smiles.

The sophisticated interior of pale tones and smart pieces of art and antique furniture is evident throughout Jane and Richard's home. Many of the antiques have come from Richard's monthly sale auctions. "We have been very fortunate to be able to buy some fine pieces over the years, such as the beautiful dining table, just right for entertaining at this time of year. Another fortuitous find was the dresser in the kitchen, which I then had painted in a distressed, soft white finish," adds Jane.

Lime-washed beams in the kitchen and dining area are echoed upstairs in the bathroom and in Coralie's

bedroom, creating a lighter spacious feel. "I decided to leave some of the beams in their original state, and chose just a few key areas to give a paler finish. I am really pleased with the effect," says Jane.

Undertaking the changes has not been without its problems for Jane and Richard, as they continued to live in the house whilst the alterations were taking place. "It was difficult at times, especially as the floors had to be replaced before new carpets were fitted upstairs, but it has been a gradual update at a pace we could cope with," says Jane. "Sourcing items locally from individual shops, has given me a great deal of pleasure and resulted in a comfortable mix of antique and contemporary design." ■



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In the drawing room, the sofas are from Made.com and the antique table and picture above the fireplace belonged to James' parents. Local florist Joanna McCrea has adorned the mantel with a mix of ivy, hydrangeas, white roses and berries.





Rising to the OCCASION

A historic estate comes with both joys and challenges, but James and Rebecca Allison have taken it all in their stride

FEATURE AND STYLING SUZANNE WEBSTER PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREAS VON EINSIEDEL



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE The dining table was purchased from the Ropner family when James' father originally bought the house. The curtains are from House of Curtain, whilst the chandelier is from JFM Interiors. Joanna from Twisted Willow has wrapped ivy around the banister to create a simple Christmas feel.

James Allison has lived at Middleton Lodge nearly all his life. He was just two years old when his father bought the magnificent Georgian mansion, and grew up with glorious views across the North York Moors. Built in 1780 for the owner of a local copper mine, the house had changed hands a number of times, gradually falling into disrepair over the years as subsequent owners failed to keep up with the financial demands of maintaining a large historic estate. When James' father, Jeffrey Allison, purchased the house, it was in quite a state of disrepair, with leaking roofs and dry rot. Over the years, Jeffrey gently brought the house back to its former glory, remaining there with his family until his retirement in 2005.

"My father has always had the most amazing spirit of adventure," explains James. "When he retired, he decided that he wanted to spend a period of time on his boat exploring the world. He was the first Brit to sail the Arctic Northwest Passage in 2007, and he actually became the very first person in the world to circumnavigate the North Pole clockwise in 2011 at the age of 73." ▶







CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE James and Rebecca wanted a contemporary feel to their kitchen and the exposed brick wall with plain painted cupboards from Howdens and wooden worktop creates a clean look. The fireplace in the family sitting room, which was originally the house laundry. A capacious pine, pantry-style cupboard was designed by James and built by his joiner, Ben, from old pieces of wood left over from the house renovation.





The house is filled with a selection of family treasures and antiques

James had great plans for the house. Having evidently inherited his father's grit and enthusiasm, he immediately rolled up his sleeves and got to work transforming the house, converting a number of disused outbuildings into inviting holiday cottages in order to finance the upkeep and maintenance demanded by such an extraordinary house. His wife Rebecca recalls the time they first met at the house. Fully expecting to find a 'stuffy lord of the manor type', she was surprised to find him abseiling down from the roof having been up there to fix something.

Rebecca was working at an architectural practice in London, and the couple spent some time making regular trips between London and North Yorkshire, before James eventually persuaded Rebecca to move north. It was not until two years later that Rebecca

discovered her own family history in the area:

"My aunt mentioned in passing that my great-great-grandmother had been born in the area. In fact, she happened to be born in the farmhouse opposite the estate – it's the only house you can see from Middleton Lodge. I knew my father had lived in Yorkshire before I was born, but I hadn't realised the connection was quite that close!"

The house is filled with a selection of family treasures and antiques from both sides of the family, mixed with newer additions from local artists such as Anna Thompson and Francesca Hudson. Thompson created the rocking horse in the bedroom of the couple's three-year-old daughter, Daisy, as well as the stag paintings in the dining room. Sculptures by James' mother, Prue, can also be found, along with Rebecca's paintings and drawings, whilst Daisy is also beginning to display signs of becoming a budding artist.

At Christmas, Rebecca and James love to decorate the house with armfuls of holly and ivy and a huge Christmas tree from the estate, whilst local florist Joanna McCrea dresses the fabulous spiral staircase in the main hall with greenery and lots of fresh flowers. "Jeffrey planted lots of Christmas trees when James was young, so there are some very large ones," explains Rebecca. "I have a little Christmas tradition of getting a new decoration from Liberty each year. And now that Daisy's getting bigger, I expect we'll have some homemade decorations starting to appear, too," she ►

CLOCKWISE FROM

TOP LEFT Curtains from House of Curtain can also be found in the master bedroom, along with an elegant dressing table where family photos and trinkets are kept. The bookshelves in the Library were hidden behind hardboard which James' mother Prue discovered with her other son Martyn. The sofas are from Darlings of Chelsea and the chair is from Made.com. A beautiful handmade wreath from Twisted Willow is hung from the front door at Middleton Lodge to welcome guests for the festive period.



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continues. Another tradition, started by James' sister Catherine, is to sprinkle magic 'reindeer dust' – oats mixed with a handful of glitter – outside the house so the reindeer can find their way. "This led to great excitement one year, when the cows started mooing loudly right on cue, leading to some very excited children," laughs Rebecca. "Stockings are a big tradition, too, from my side of the family," she adds. "Everyone gets one, even the grown-ups receive a surprise or two – perhaps a jar of home-made jam or chutney, or possibly a bottle of sloe gin."

"We'll have turkey or goose (reared on the estate) with all the trimmings for Christmas lunch. James is a fabulous cook, and takes cooking for large numbers in his stride, which comes in handy for big family Christmases. Last year we had a seven-bird roast, which had been shot and prepared by Nigel, James' brother-in-law, who farms the estate. Both sides of the family, all our siblings, parents and all the nieces and nephews were here for that one. Afterwards, it's always sleeves

rolled up for the washing up, and collapsing by the fire for the Queen's Speech, glass of something in hand. It's just a happy chaos really!" she smiles.

The estate is dotted with various agricultural buildings, which the couple are working on sensitively restoring, Rebecca taking on the architectural and design work and James' brother Martyn leading the building team. The Coach House has been transformed into an award-winning hotel and restaurant, and the family hosts regular events for the local community throughout the year. "These big old estates are designed to entertain large groups of people," explains James. "It might have been easier to build a few houses in the grounds and sell them off, but we wanted to keep the estate intact for future generations."

Looking forward to 2016 and beyond, James has recently begun to re-landscape the gardens, and Rebecca has been working on plans to reinstate the kitchen gardens and orangery with the help

CLOCKWISE FROM

TOP LEFT A four-poster bed was bought with the house when James' father purchased it. The cushions are from Laura Ashley and the bedding is from House of Fraser. Rebecca gave these dainty cufflinks to James when Daisy was born. The bracelet is from Assya in London. The tiles in the bathroom came from Purpletree and the bath and towel rail were both from Tynemouth Architectural Salvage.



Rebecca recalls meeting James at the house only to find him abseiling from the roof

ABOVE Walls are painted in Parma Gray by Farrow & Ball in Daisy's bedroom. The curtains are from House of Curtain.

RIGHT The beautiful rocking horse from Anna Thompson takes pride of place in Daisy's bedroom.

of the celebrated landscape architect and several-times Chelsea gold medal winner Tom Stuart-Smith. "The estate is a lifelong project and we find every year there is something to work on or design," James muses. "We can't do it all at once, but that's part of the fun. It all needs to pay for itself somehow. After the kitchen garden, the dovecote is the next big project – that will create another three cottages, which we will let out as holiday accommodation," explains James. His energy is phenomenal. "The only way to get him to slow down is to send him up a mountain," Rebecca affectionately laughs.

With James' hands-on approach and engineering background, and Rebecca's artistic architectural background – along with no small measure of stamina – they make a formidable team. A wonderful mix of enthusiasm, creativity and hard work appears to be the perfect way to run a modern country estate. ■



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The main sitting room was designed for sociable gatherings, with sofas from Overbury Interiors and Gilpin cushions from Designers Guild, offset by Menorca wallpaper by Manuel Canovas.

PRECISION & POETRY

Gerard and Caroline Ayrton-Grime's very different approaches to design blend beautifully in this gracious Georgian-style home

FEATURE SERENA FOKSCHANER PHOTOGRAPHS JAMES BALSTON STYLING JILL SHEARER



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Abbeywood Damask wallpaper by Ralph Lauren can be found in the dining room. The mirror over the Chesney's mantel was found at The Silkroad in Haslemere. The central table in the hallway came from Caroline and Gerard's previous home, a converted hotel. Gerard made this table by upcycling an old garden table and adding a new top. The hallway serves as both an entrance and entertaining space.

On an early December morning Caroline Ayrton-Grime opens her front door and, immediately, you are enveloped in a cocktail of festive scents and sights.

Wafts of cinnamon and nutmeg drift from candles on carved fireplaces. The swirling walnut stair rail is garlanded with ivy and wintergreen; mistletoe dangles like pearls and bright fires cast shadows across the creamy limestone floor. Add a slumbering hound into the mix and you might have stepped into a noughties version of *Downton Abbey*.

But there is nothing ancestral about this house, set in a desirable dip of Sussex, which was, in fact, built from scratch six years ago by Caroline's husband Gerard, a property developer with an eye for a prime site. "When we bought the land it came with planning permission for a nine-bedroom house," explains Gerard. "We kept the exterior but modified the

interior to suit my ideal country house; it is [in the shape of] a cross with the hallway in the middle and all the main rooms leading off from that."

Natural light determined the layout: "All the key rooms face south west," continues Gerard, striding ahead to the kitchen. Spanning the entire length of the back of the house, the open-plan space includes pleasingly slouchy sofas for the couple's four grown-up children. A curved bar divides the dining area from the kitchen and there is even space for the dog basket, which is tucked between the bespoke units. The sash windows overlooking the Blackdown Hills, where Tennyson once rambled, are divided into three, rather than the conventional two sashes. "We stole the idea from a Georgian house in Ireland," explains Caroline. "You can draw up the windows and step into the garden from anywhere downstairs." ►





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Ceramics from Spencer Swaffer in Arundel add a rural note to the bespoke Mowlem kitchen, where the bar stools are by Kestepoort. Caroline's eclectic collections continue in the kitchen. An amethyst-hued piece of vintage Belgian glass inspired the Aga colour choice. Tempting seasonal sweet treats. The design of the house is inspired by Georgian architecture.

Other features, such as panelled doors, a cantilevered staircase and classical lanterns, anchor the house in the Georgian age. In less skilled hands the result might have been a pastiche, but here, thanks to Gerard's eye for proportion and detail, it works. "It's all about the details," says Gerard, as Caroline laughs: "I've never lived in a house where a plug was in the wrong place." She agrees that they are complementary opposites: Gerard the spirit-level-wielding perfectionist who says he spent most of his childhood in the school workshop and for whom "a misplaced brick is endlessly irritating", whilst Caroline is the literary romantic. It is this combination of poetry and precision that gives the house character, preventing it from feeling too shiny and new. "A home should feel as though it has evolved over time," says Caroline, who collaborated with interior designer Patti Money-Coutts, of Overbury

Interiors, layering prints and patterns to evoke "that warm, sociable feel." Patti expands: "Caroline is all about family and friends. She wanted to create a welcoming atmosphere for all generations."

"It's a party house," agrees Caroline, heading to the drawing room, where bay windows open onto a beautifully tailored parterre garden. The baronial fireplace was carved by Chesney's, whilst the curving sofa came from William Yeoward. A pair of 1950s French wheat-sheaf tables (Coco Chanel had the same design in her Parisian apartment) was spotted at a dealer in Petworth. Caroline's touch extends to the bedrooms where sash windows are dressed as grandly as a swagger portrait, in pelmets of silks or linens. One bedroom is wall-to-wall Canovas toile; the result surprisingly calming. In another, tea-rose-festooned Sanderson curtains chime with a pale French ►



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ABOVE "I've always had a toile room everywhere we've lived," says Caroline of this guest room where the curtain fabric and wallpaper are Fleury by Manuel Canovas. An inexpensive bed was customised with the addition of Lancelot check by GP & J Baker.

RIGHT Inspired by a suite in Amberley Castle, the master bedroom leads to separate his-and-hers dressing rooms and bathrooms. Gerard designed the bath but Stone Circle can make the same one to order.

bed. Everywhere, graceful enfilades tempt you towards bathrooms where oval baths float like schooners on taupe-tiled seas and Downton-esque dressing rooms are lined in wood, like cigar boxes.

Flowing through every room is a gentle scheme of greens, taupes and purples; a combination partly inspired by an amethyst-hued Val St Lambert sculpture that Caroline bought on eBay. Elsewhere, Caroline points out cherished objects, which bring history to this new-build: the desk in her dressing room where Dodie Smith wrote *I Capture the Castle*, or a pair of painted chests that may have belonged to Ava Gardner. "I like to believe they did," Caroline muses.

Carefully chosen pieces of art are omnipresent, from a painting by local artist Paul Treasure to a pot by Sarah Raven, but the overall feel is definitely not that of a rarefied gallery, where hushed tones are encouraged and nothing is to be touched. Thrifty finds abound: the gilt-edged mirrors and French beds were spotted, like jewels in the dust, at a trade warehouse in Lincolnshire. In the hallway, the central table looks like a venerated heirloom: "It used to be a chopping table in the kitchen of our last home, a former ►





ABOVE Stretching luxuriously across the back of the house, the master bedroom walls are lined in Ellen by Colefax and Fowler. The painted bedside tables came from a previous home and may have belonged to Ava Gardner. **RIGHT** Designed to capitalise on views of the downy Sussex hills, the guest bedroom combines Sanderson Sorila fabric curtains with Zoffany's Meadow wallpaper to bring a timeless air to this new-build home.

hotel,” explains Gerard. “We restored it, and it has been with us ever since.”

There is more mixing and matching in the dining room where walls are papered in dashing Ralph Lauren designs offsetting the art-deco butler’s drinks trolleys, which once graced the Savoy and were bought at auction. Side tables are adorned with family silver; a row of sweetie-bright ceramics by Ali Cooper punctures the formality with a typically Caroline touch. The handsome walnut dining table, composed of four separate tables, was designed by Gerard so that, at Christmas, the room can stretch to seat a convivial 24.

Afterwards, guests drift towards the most extraordinary room in the house – an Indian boudoir made from carved stone panels salvaged from a mansion (known as a *haveli* in India), which Gerard discovered languishing in a container in a saleroom yard. “It was like assembling a jigsaw,” he says, remembering how each piece was teased into the space. The ink-black ceiling is studded with fibre-optic lights plotted to replicate the night sky when Caroline and Gerard first moved here. Romantic and precise, it is a fitting place to end a tour of this beguiling home. ■





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AT HOME WITH
Katherine Hooker

Her beloved pet dachshund, cosying up in bed with a book, and walks in nearby Kensington Gardens are just a few of the things that make a home so special for this bespoke fashion designer

Spending her childhood in Africa had a profound effect on designer Katherine Hooker. It was whilst travelling as a teenager that she came across a superbly cut jacket that later inspired her business, which specialises in semi-bespoke tweed jackets, coats and waistcoats. After years in the film industry, she finally launched her business in 2001, and today, has a store in Chelsea, London. She counts the Duchess of Cambridge, Meryl Streep and Taylor Swift amongst her loyal customers.

Where did you grow up and what was your childhood home like?

I was born in Africa and I grew up in Cyprus, Tunisia, Nigeria and Kenya, which was the last country we lived in. My father worked for Esso oil, so every three years we moved. Because of that, we had a number of homes, so there wasn't one childhood home. My mother threw herself into every culture wherever we were – she certainly wasn't your typical ex-pat country club mother – so we accumulated all sorts of stuff along the way, and it came with us wherever we went. I always remember the crates arriving in whatever new house we would arrive in. My sister and I would make Wendy houses out of them after they'd been emptied. Even when we moved to London when I was nine – by then my parents had gone their separate ways – I think we lived in around ten different houses. My Mum is quite the gypsy.

How did you adapt to London life?

We went to boarding school in Dorset, which was a shock! But I'm very, very adaptable. My upbringing definitely suited my personality, whilst my oldest sister didn't fare very well from it. I'm very at home wherever I go – you're forced to feel at home within yourself when you have that kind of an upbringing – so I took to England like a duck to water. I loved it. Although, I remember going to Battersea Park when we arrived in February and running around and my lungs really aching because of the cold air. Up until then I'd literally been living up a tree in the sun.

How did your upbringing affect the way you decorate your home?

It's interesting having grown up all over the place. The things that you have around you are the things that make you feel at home. I have things in my home that are from all

over the world – I like to have things from wherever I've been.

What is English about your home?

The actual rooms themselves. One thing that made me want my flat, which is in Hammersmith Grove, was because it has all of its original features. The cornicing and the ceiling rose are the real thing and it feels very English. When it was built, this building would have been a whole house; now it's split into three flats, and I have the whole of the ground floor.

What made you move to the area?

I grew up in South Kensington but there was no way I could afford to buy there myself. I was driving down Hammersmith Grove and seeing all of these 'for sale' signs and I thought, "this must be cheap because there's a high turnover." I bought at the very bottom of the crash – I think it was 1991 – so my timing was very lucky.

Who do you live with today?

I live with my dog, Pretzel, who is the most gorgeous dachshund and is now ten years old. He comes to work with me and, when I travel, I have a whole stable of people who adore him and look after him. He's unbelievably spoilt and sleeps in my bed. My boyfriend Dimitri is Greek, from Athens yet most of his time is in Patmos where we also have a house together. He's a brilliant architect, so we have a lovely place there. He comes to London in the winter for lovely long weekends and I go there in the summer for about three months. We have a rule that we're never apart for more than five weeks.

You work a lot with tweed, does that manifest in the interior at all?

I have tweed cushions, throws and blankets. In Greece, I have even made a tweed quilt that sits on our bed, more for aesthetic purposes than anything else. One day, I'd like to set up a 'home' collection.

Name a favourite room in the house

My bedroom, which is at the back of the flat. It's extremely tiny but I love cosying up there with a book and my dog.

Do you have your eye on anything for the home at the moment?

A rug for the back part of the double reception room from The Rug Company. It's owned by a couple of friends

[Christopher and Suzanne Sharp], who I've known since my early teens. They've done amazingly well but it's probably because their rugs are proper, for real living.

Where do you shop for the interior?

I tend to nick things from my mother. Her place is crammed to the gills – you can imagine with all the travelling she's done – so there's literally not a spare floor, wall or surface. I've always gathered things from weird, unexpected places, rather than actually from a shop.

Do you have any guilty pleasures?

I used to work in the film industry as a set decorator, and one of the industry's greatest secrets is Shepherds Bush Market. You can get [anything] and everything from there – of a certain quality, of course.

Describe an ideal weekend at home

I work incredibly hard and it's not unusual for me to put in 90 to 100 hours a week. Therefore, when I get time off, it's nice to do hardly anything at all. There's a lovely deli on my doorstep where everything is homemade and organic. My favourite start to the day is to go there – it's like another home – get some food for the day, walk the dog in Kensington Gardens and then go home and relax, reading or watching TV.

What does home mean to you?

Home is where you're with people that you love. I can make anywhere my home, so it's much more about the people. I'm not one of those people who minds people with bad taste. When I worked on films, I'll never forget a stylist pointing to a bunch of flowers she'd been sent and saying, 'Someone's sent me carnations! How common.' I remember thinking, 'But someone's sent you flowers. Isn't [that] more important?' I'm not into style in that obvious way. I love beauty, and I'm inspired by beautiful things, but for me it's more of an abstract thing. And the same goes for home.

Finally, what should no English home be without?

A dog. The English just have a special connection with dogs. There's a real relationship between man and dog. It's such an English thing and it makes all the difference to your life and your home. ■

View designs at katherinehooker.com

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STYLE INSPIRATION

Our special section dedicated to design and decorating inspiration begins here ➤

PALE & INTERESTING

Far from being stark and cold, a white scheme mixed with the gentlest neutrals can create a calming mood in which to relax. A pared-back palette will require a little more attention to detail to maintain allure – note the smart leather piping, button upholstery and the casual, yet cohesive, display of pictures on the radiator. Finally, complement with a shimmer of silvers and crystal for a touch of glamour.

New England Knox Chair, £665; Maine Footstool, £265, both Furniture Village





Decorating RESOLUTIONS

Start the New Year as you mean to go on, with a new ethos when styling the home – from being braver with colour to considering provenance



Be more decisive

Staffan Tollgard,
director, **Staffan**
Tollgard Design Group

Struggling to make decorating decisions can delay a project for weeks, sometimes months. Staffan Tollgard offers advice for narrowing selections to enable a clear vision to come to fruition.

“Design today offers too many choices – as much for the designer as for the client. There is a world, both physical and virtual, of directions to go down and it takes a clear eye and a strong will to go down one path and stick to your guns when an equally attractive alternative presents itself. Finding the path is key, and we have a name for it at our Design Group: ‘the red thread’. It’s a Scandinavian way of describing the DNA of a piece of creative work: the key ingredients that give it its unique flavour and relate it to the client’s story.

I follow the breadcrumbs dropped by the client: who they are; what they want the house to say about them; what they have collected and cherished along their journey. I read the clues in the architecture and the environment and I distil this information into a clear direction: the red thread. It might be a piece of art, or a period of architecture. It might be, as in the interior pictured [left], the eclectic mix of old and new together with the client’s favourite colour – a rich and dramatic aubergine that is subtly repeated so as to weave a literal red thread across the house. Once I have found the red thread, I practice the art of sacrifice: even if something wonderful presents itself, if it doesn’t follow or add to the red thread or the design story we’re telling, I say no.”



Declutter & refresh

Mark Gillette, director, **Mark Gillette**
Interior Design

Be a little ruthless and make a clean break with pieces that do not fit a new scheme.

“I love mixing antique and contemporary, and this can work beautifully. However, I am not averse to being quite honest when much-loved antiques or old family favourites simply will not work with a new scheme, no matter how hard you try to accommodate them. Whatever passes the ‘will it work?’ test must be in keeping with the new vision. It is often quite cathartic to declutter when deciding what to keep, but it is also vital to look at up-dating objects and how they are displayed. I like creating new ways to display traditional objects; for example, putting a mixture of decorative silver, with other objects, old and new, into a vitrine to create an old-fashioned cabinet of curiosities. Don’t be scared to reframe those old family photographs; get rid of silver and use leather or shagreen frames instead. It’s all about experimenting.”



Invest in Craftsmanship

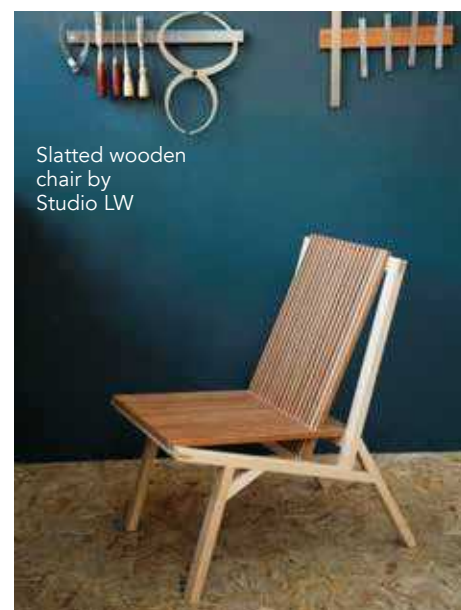
Rosy Greenless, executive director, **Crafts Council**

In a world of mass-production, owning unique or handcrafted items is both a luxury and a wonderful way to support local makers, who use heritage skills and develop modern techniques to create beautiful pieces.

“Making with our hands is a deep-seated human instinct and, faced in the 21st century with an increasingly digital world, it has become more popular than ever. People are looking for an alternative to mass consumption, so we’ve witnessed

a renewed interest in authentic products with known provenance over the last few years. Britain has a long heritage of makers producing high-quality, beautiful products, more often than not using locally sourced materials where possible.”

Visit the Crafts Council website for more inspiration and a useful directory of craftspeople: craftscouncil.org.uk ►



Slatted wooden
chair by
Studio LW



Utilise space and storage

**Jane Stewart, design director,
Mowlem & Co**

Create a feature out of practical storage, and make tidying things away and keeping them organised a pleasure.

“Storage is an essential part of good design and, if considered from the start of a project, can ensure that everything has a place and that there is even a little extra to allow for a growing number of possessions. Smartly tailored designs make storage a beautiful, and not purely functional, part of the design, and utilise every inch of space. Here, a useful cloakroom area with additional storage has been created simply by having a shelved coat rack and wicker pull-out baskets under a built-in bench. The design suited the modern country aesthetic we had achieved throughout the kitchen and makes what is simply somewhere to store shoes, scarves and dog leads into an attractive feature that would otherwise have been an empty space beneath the coat rack.”



Embrace wallpaper

**Tricia Guild, director,
Designers Guild**

Simply braving using wallpaper, as opposed to a sleek painted finish, can be daunting. There are so many gorgeous options available, it would be a shame

to shy away from experimenting with different designs, whether a classic stripe, trailing floral or elegant damask, there is something to suit all tastes. If the technical side of hanging paper is the deterring factor, employ the services of a professional. As Tricia Guild reveals, one's efforts are likely to be well rewarded.

“Wallpaper is a brilliant way to bring colour, pattern and texture to a space and there are a wealth of options on offer – from smart geometrics or hand-painted florals to textured vinyl designs and subtle plaster effects. I would say don't be led by preconceived rules, such as ‘large-scale designs cannot be used in smaller spaces’ – on the contrary, I think larger scale designs can work as a trompe l'oeil and draw the eye, elongating the space. What is key is that it is a pattern you feel drawn to, and that the design and colours work with the existing components within the room. If you are nervous, why not try out a large sample on the wall, which you could combine with paint samples and fabric swatches before you embark on papering the whole space”



Be bold with pattern

Paolo Moschino and Philip Vergeylen, co-directors, Nicholas Haslam Ltd

Choosing and using pattern can be overwhelming, but Moschino and Vergeylen offer advice on making the process easier.

“When choosing a bold pattern, make sure that the repeat in the pattern suits the scale of the room. This wallpaper

[above] by Madeleine Castaing was the ideal fit for this room, so

we also used the pattern on the blinds. If you choose a heavily patterned, sophisticated wallpaper design, make sure that you create contrast with simple, clean lines in other aspects of the scheme (like the white Brussels Oyster linen on the bed canopy, the curtains and the Flokati rug in front of the fireplace). Create a conversation between the various design elements of the room to make it all appear seamless. Here, the scalloped pattern within the wallpaper was echoed in the edging of the bed canopy and the colours of the upholstery mirror the palette of the wallpaper. Finally, always choose a pattern or a colour with your gut, not your head.” ▶

GoodWeave-approved
Ponti Blue rug by
Suzanne Sharp for
The Rug Company





Make ethical choices

Nina Smith, executive director, GoodWeave

Consider where and how products are made. Supporting GoodWeave to end child labour in the industry is a good place to start.

“Child servitude is a crime committed against children worldwide. GoodWeave works to end child labour in the rug industry and provides educational opportunities for those children

rescued from the looms. Rugs that have been independently certified as child-labour-free display the GoodWeave label on the reverse, which is uniquely numbered and can be traced back to the certified producer. The label denotes that a percentage of the rug’s price is used to educate children in the weaving communities of South Asia. In the UK there are twenty rug companies that are partnered with GoodWeave and offer child-labour-free certified rugs for you to purchase.”

For a full list of partnered retailers, visit goodweave.org.uk



Consider sustainability

Victoria Meale, director, Victoria Meale Design

Victoria Meale offers advice on creating a sustainable scheme without compromising on style.

“It is not only fashionable to mix old and new, but incorporating reclaimed timber and antiques is the most sustainable and ethical way of furnishing.

The largest surface area of any project is usually the ceilings and walls, therefore the cheapest and easiest way of having the greatest impact on the indoor air quality is to change the paint used. I recommend having paints made up in Eicó paint, available at Ray Munn, I specify this for its non-toxic, low VOC content and the quality of the finish. I also aim to use 100 per cent natural materials wherever possible. On this project [above] woods were either formaldehyde-free composites or FSC-certified solid timber. Using natural materials for upholstery with a barrier cloth also eliminates the need for chemical fire retarding.”



Revitalise old furniture

Annie Sloan, founder, Annie Sloan Paints

Give a tired or dated piece a new lease of life, rather than buying new, by getting creative with a paintbrush.

“I’ve noticed that people tend to have more confidence with their painting and take more risks when a less expensive piece of furniture is being transformed. Some of the best results come from painting pieces of furniture that have been inherited or bought at car boot sales. Get started by taking a look at one of your rooms – what don’t you like? What could be improved? Could it be improved with changing the colour or texture using paint? My Chalk Paint™ can be used to paint directly onto metal, ceramic, concrete, leather and wood. This makes transforming floors, walls, furniture and lighting really easy as there’s no need to prep or prime the surfaces, which means you can get stuck right into the fun part – painting!” ▶



Have colour confidence

Annabel Astor, co-founder, Oka

With a whole spectrum of colour it is a shame to stay in neutrals or tried and tested favourites – embrace a new shade with confidence.

“Decorating in strong colours gives a cleaner, more refined appearance. A room must be interesting if it is decorated in such a vivid colour – it

would be impossible for it to be boring. I generally decorate in neutral and add splashes of colour through rugs and cushions but a bold dining room is refreshingly different. My dining room at home was decorated over 50 years ago by Nancy Lancaster’s niece, Elizabeth Winn. When I arrived, I hung china on the walls to brighten it up and added green chairs to intensify the depth of the colour. Later on, I added a scarlet Suzani throw over the trestle table to remove the formality of a dining room. The pairing of red and green is often overlooked, but the two complement each other so well. I like to create a warm comfortable atmosphere whilst entertaining, so lighting is very important. When using a bold colour in a room it is important to think about what impact the lighting will have. I like to have lights everywhere, as many as possible, but with lower wattage bulbs to give an all-over glow. Candles are a must in a dining room, as they create intimacy.” ■



FEATURE KATY MCLEAN PHOTOGRAPH PT1 (ROSY GREEN/LESS) SOPHIE NUTVELIAN

A photograph of a grand Georgian interior hallway. The space features a high, vaulted ceiling with intricate plasterwork. On the left, two large, fluted marble columns support the structure. The floor is paved with a geometric pattern of light and dark tiles. In the center, a white door is visible at the end of the hallway. To the right, a dark wood console table holds two large, ornate lamps with textured shades. A large, abstract blue and white artwork is mounted on the wall above the table. Three glass-enclosed pendant lights hang from the ceiling, casting a warm glow.

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LEFT TO RIGHT The use of mirrors to reflect other glass accessories or fittings helps to create light and airy interiors. Rupert Bevan created a feature wall in the sitting room of a Kensington property by using mirror glass panels from floor to ceiling. Foxing to the edges of each panel, along with decorative studs in between, provides a timeworn aesthetic. Fossil Gold mirror glass from Dominic Schuster encourages a sparkling antiqued look. Also available in tinted glass.

QUIET REFLECTIONS

Clever use of mirror glass can transform a home, and the breadth of choice available makes imagination the only limiting factor

Mirror glass has been around for two millennia, and its timeless magic makes it enduringly popular. Aside from the traditional over-mantel and hall-console mirrors, there are many more imaginative ways to use mirror glass to enhance a home.

A mirrored feature wall fools the eye into thinking there is a room beyond, made more believable by an understated frame or surround. Using mirror glass panels is not only more cost-effective than an oversized mirror, but the stud fixings in between the panels offer a design statement of their own, with a choice of ornate designs in burnished metal, elevating them from purely functional to decorative.

Mirrors specialist Dominic Schuster says, "Panelling a whole wall in antiqued mirror is very effective and popular, often behind a bed frame or to make a small room appear larger whilst offering character and interest. This is actually fairly straightforward and cost-effective, as you are only paying for the mirror and not for components that go into framing the mirror."

Using mirror glass close to the focal point of a room maximises its reflective power. Mirror-panelled alcoves to either side of a fireplace or bed, or in a dining room (filling the space from wall to wall and from skirting board to cornice) gives the illusion that the

room extends. Designer and maker Rupert Bevan says, "Having mirrors in the alcoves coming down almost to floor level creates much more of an illusion of a larger room than focusing attention on the mantel wall itself." Placing matching lamps and tables in each alcove effectively gives four lamps for the price of two. The symmetry and repetition helps to 'sell' the illusion. Mirror-glass specialists offer bespoke services to exactly fit alcoves with either two single pieces of hand-silvered mirror glass or a series of panels.

Instead of hanging a medium-sized ornately framed mirror above the mantelpiece, why not cover the entire chimneybreast in mirror glass? Removing a beautiful frame from the equation allows the mirror to take centre stage. Take this one step further by mounting a framed picture or even another mirror on top, adding depth and originality. Mirror panels can also be used effectively as a back to shelving, on a bath panel or in a frame to look like a window.

Placing two identical mirrors directly opposite each other on facing walls creates an 'infinity room' effect whereby both walls seem to melt away in an expanse of space. This approach can illuminate a dark hallway or narrow corridor, and the bigger the mirrors, the bigger the impact. Rupert Bevan explains: "You can create a 'four-dimensional' effect of an infinitely reflected room, which can be quite exciting and fantastical." ►

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A large-scale mirror hung upright, touching the floor and almost the ceiling (such as the one shown here in a design by Paolo Moschino), can create a faux doorway effect, which fools the eye into thinking there is another room beyond. Placed in a hallway opposite a doorway, it lends a sense of grandeur and evens out a room's proportions. A low piece of furniture, such as a decorative slender seat, can bridge the gap between the reflected floor and the real thing.

Designers have long used mirrors to bounce light around bathrooms and make them feel bigger, but, increasingly, mirror glass is being used in the kitchen as splash-backs and slivers inset into the framework of bespoke units, adding a decorative element and a sense of glamour, whilst maintaining the functionality of the room. Devon-based tile manufacturer Original Style has stylish ranges such as Silver Mirror and Antique Mirror with a golden antiqued effect, which bring drama and glamour to any room. "Try co-ordinating glass tiles with a classic black-and-white floor for a timeless and stylish look," says the firm's designer Jane Addis. Tiles offer more flexibility, she says. "Experiment with tiling schemes. Offset squared mirrored tiles for the harlequin look, or brick bond style mirrored metro." She adds that mirror tiles can cover a larger surface area, and are a more safe and secure choice.

Slivers of mirror inset into the framework of bookcases or as panels within wall panels is a more subtle way to harness the power of mirror glass. "Using recessed mirrors in headboards is a fantastic way to bounce light around a room, particularly in smaller spaces," says design director Natalia Miyar from Helen Green Design. Another understated, yet stylish, way to use mirror glass is with a mirror-inlaid room-dividing screen; amplifying the decorative value of this piece of furniture whilst softening its abruptness by creating the illusion that it is transparent.

Mirrored furniture is timeless and elegant; at once beautiful and invisible. Simpsons Mirrors & Furniture has an impressive range of furniture and accessories clad in part or entirely of mirror glass. This concept of dual functionality is echoed by The Glass Radiator Co. which makes radiators that look exactly like smooth mirrors. ►



TOP Created by Rupert Bevan, in collaboration with Osborn Interiors, for a Belgravia apartment, these mottled fabric-backed mirror-glass panels have been used to great effect.

ABOVE Whilst mirrored tiles may make a stylish addition to a kitchen or bathroom, they might also be used to provide a little extra glamour within a dressing room.

Antique Mirror tiles, 200 x 100 x 5mm, £229.95 for a square metre, Original Style

Decorative finishes can help a mirror blend harmoniously with the rest of a room and give it charm and character of its own, instead of its value being solely what it reflects. *Verre églomisé* is the French technique of applying paint, gold or silver leaf individually or in a combination to the underside of a sheet of glass. Foxing means that delightful patina of age when the silvering in antique mirrors has deteriorated and turned misty, and this is such a desirable look that ‘fake-foxing’ can achieve this on new mirrors, with different patterns and intensities available.

Before placing mirror glass in the home, consider the attractiveness of whatever will be reflected. You could choose to reflect a cherished piece of art or an ornate ceiling, or keep it simple. Rupert Bevan suggests: “It’s better not to have very ‘busy’ or over-complicated things on the opposite wall. Mirror panelling that covers much of a wall will also reflect shadows as well as light, so try not to have too many things reflected, such as the back of sofas, cabinets, TVs or other media with wires that look messy.”

Lighting, whether real, candle or electric, can transform the use of mirror glass, adding a magnified sense of warmth and light. A carefully placed mirror near a lit crystal chandelier looks magical and lets onlookers appreciate its beauty without having to look up.

Bevelling can add a diamond-style quality that catches the light beautifully and, as well as being decorative, protects the mirror edges, with different degrees achieving different effects.

Hanging mirror glass need not be intimidating, say the experts. Dominic Schuster advises: “We mount mirrors directly to the walls using a silicon glue. Our mirrors are also foil-backed, which offers safety as, if broken, they remain stuck to the foil, which is itself glued to the wall. We can also mount mirrors onto a lightweight composite board, and use split battens, making the mirror more secure by spreading the weight.” Meanwhile, Rupert Bevan advises: “As long as the areas are surveyed properly beforehand, mirrors can always be adhered well. Even if the wall isn’t flat, battens can be used, so the mirror is fixed straight.” ■

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When guests are staying for an extended period, taking time in advance of their arrival to carefully plan and arrange interiors will ensure hosting does not feel like a tiring marathon of constant effort, but instead a pleasurable experience where it is even possible to relax oneself.

The hallway is the first room your guests will see, and it will establish an inaugural mood. As guests have usually travelled some way, a warm welcome will instantly brighten their arrival. A sprinkling of seasonal decorations is uplifting to weary travellers and promises a festive time to come. Be sure to make room on the coat rack, in storage areas and cupboards for extra coats and boots to avoid an unwelcoming palaver on the doorstep. If extra storage is required, the Cotswold Company has a wide variety of reasonably priced hallway ranges, whilst Oka also has a selection of stylish and practical designs.

COSY GUEST ROOM

If guest bedrooms have not been used recently, it is a good idea to check the practicality of the rooms some time beforehand. Window treatments should allow flexibility for guests who like to sleep in total darkness and those who like to let in a little light. Blackout or venetian blinds, along with full-length curtains in a thin material, should satisfy both preferences. If any windows are high up, or difficult to reach, try Velux for remote-controlled blinds.

With regard to lighting the room, it is advisable to have two lighting systems, the main light with a dimmer switch and directional wall lights for reading.



Mounting wall lights saves room on bedside tables, so that guests will have space to place their own items. However, if there is no space on the wall for lights or no time to install them, contemporary table lamps with dimmer switches will allow guests the flexibility to set their own mood and are preferable to standard on/off switch table lights. Original BTC's Walter table lamp, and Jim Lawrence's Abercrombie lamp are two smart, dimmable examples.

If the bedroom has an en suite, consider remote-controlled LED floor lights to install truly luxurious convenience – so one person can find their way in the night without disturbing anyone else.

As guest bedrooms are not in constant use, they can easily become a spare room, used for clutter and an over-flow wardrobe. If there is no option to move items to another room, dividers can hide unsightly mess. Wardrobes should be large enough for guests' full-length coats and dresses to hang without getting crumpled. Clothes cupboards should be furnished with plenty of wooden hangers – try The Hanger Store. For all other accessories, such as acid-free tissue paper and storage boxes, visit totalwardrobecare.co.uk. Try to ensure provision of a full-length mirror, too – fit one inside the wardrobe if room space is limited. ►

LEFT TO RIGHT For delicious silk wares, try Gingerlily's new Rubans bedding range to provide guests with a soft place to slumber. Bedlinen prices start from £28, Gingerlily Storage space for extra bedlinen is invaluable. This wardrobe has a linen cupboard on one side and hanging space on the other side for flexible use. *Ermitage wardrobe, from £2,295, Grange* This ottoman can be custom made to the perfect size for storage at the end of a guest bed. *Ange custom ottoman, £350, An Angel at my Table*



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out of sight.
Estelle chest, £999,
Atkin and Thyme
A suit rack is useful
for guests attending
smart festive events.
Wooden suit rack
bay, £245, Oka



Although guest bedrooms should have plenty of space for visitors' belongings, the room will not be cosy if it is too plain and sparse. Subtle characterful touches bring the room to life; consider evocative and tranquil paintings on the wall as a lovely way to add interest and atmosphere. In smaller guest bedrooms, save space by coupling a fold-away chair with a small table next to it, the table can then double up for many purposes – from a dressing table to a writing desk or a space for laptops. A keepsake box or china bowl helps to make the room seem homely and will provide somewhere for guests to put their trinkets, rather than leaving them loose on the tabletop.

Although Christmas is a time to switch off and relax, technology has become a part of life in modern times, and it is courteous to provide the WiFi code, ready for guests to stay connected; it may also be worth leaving an extension cord and a tray for laptops in bedrooms.

To ensure that guests can relax in an ambient temperature, make sure that the room has been heated; walking into a cold bedroom is a very unwelcoming experience. Placing a rug beneath and beside the bed helps insulate and provides a visual suggestion of warmth. Often in our own bedrooms, aesthetics give way to practicality when dressing the bed, but in a guest bedroom, making the bed seem visually appealing will make the best impression. Luxurious bedding made from silk or cotton with a high thread count will make the bed feel heavenly to sleep in. Layer several pillows of various thicknesses, from soft to hard, on each side of the bed, with a couple of spare pillows stored close at hand. If the bedroom is large, an armoire cupboard or blanket





chest is a wise investment to store extra bedlinen. However, for smaller rooms, a leather trunk on top of the wardrobe, or even a cupboard inside a bedside table, can be used to house extra options. Although it is useful to have extra layers stowed away, dress the bed with a throw or blanket to maximise the cosy appeal. Josephine Home has a tactile selection of lamb's wool, angora and cashmere throws. Alternatively, Counting Lambs offers sumptuous eiderdowns. Extra little touches, such as a bed valance – particularly if it hides drawers underneath – and colourful cushions, all help to make the bed impressively cosy and comfortable.

Just before guests arrive, furnish the room with a few final touches, such as a silk sleeping mask, a few locally made snacks, and a carafe and glasses for water. A reed diffuser in a soft fragrance will ensure the room smells pleasant without being overpowering, and seasonal fresh flowers will be noticed and appreciated. Bath towels, hand towels and face cloths are best left neatly folded on the bed so that guests are left in no doubt as to which set is theirs.

BATHROOM AMENITIES

In guest bathrooms it is paramount to make readily available everything that guests are likely to need. It is easy to forget essential items when packing, so a travel-size selection of toiletries will always be appreciated, especially from a luxurious brand such as Penhaligon's or Jo Malone. Larger items, such as hairdryers, will also be appreciated by guests so they can save on luggage space. Other items that are important to place in the bathroom, to avoid guests' embarrassment, should include standard medicines, along with plenty of spare loo rolls.

In the kitchen, advance preparation mostly involves tasks that create ease for the host. If the best china is stored at the back of dressers or in hard-to-reach cupboards, temporarily rearrange these items to ensure easy access, ready for constant use. It is also a lovely idea to prepare a tea tray, ready for morning coffee or tea before breakfast, so early-rising guests can help themselves without having to wait for their hosts to appear. ▶

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Invest in a stylish bed frame for guest bedrooms.

Provence bed, from £2,475, Grange

Extra pegs are useful for guests' coats.

Peg-it-all Pegboard, £198, Kreis Design

A personalised tray gives a tongue-in-cheek hotel feel to proceedings and doubles as a spare drinks table, too. *Personalised oak tray, £180, Not on the high street.com*

A luxury bathroom dressing table meets all ablution needs. *Bespoke furniture by Tim Wood*

Blend classic and modern prints
for wide appeal.
Bedlinen from £55; lamp shade
and dog bed (shown at the foot
of the bed), Charmajesty; all
fabrics Bernard Thorp in
collaboration with Charmajesty





Blenheim bouquet soap, £24, Penhaligon's



Soft pink Nervures bathrobe, £219, La Perla at Amara



Garland carafe magnum, £74, William Yeoward Crystal



Theodora hot-water-bottle cotton cover, £25, Liberty



Flores three-panel screen in grey, £850, John Lewis

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Convert an office into a bedroom with a fold-out bed. Envelope bed, £1,450, Oka Create a festive atmosphere with scented candles. Sloe gin candle, £28, The White Company A selection of luxurious bathroom products is always greatly appreciated. Ormonde toiletries from £35; Ormonde large candle with lid, £54, all rachelbatesinteriors.com

RELAXING AND DINING

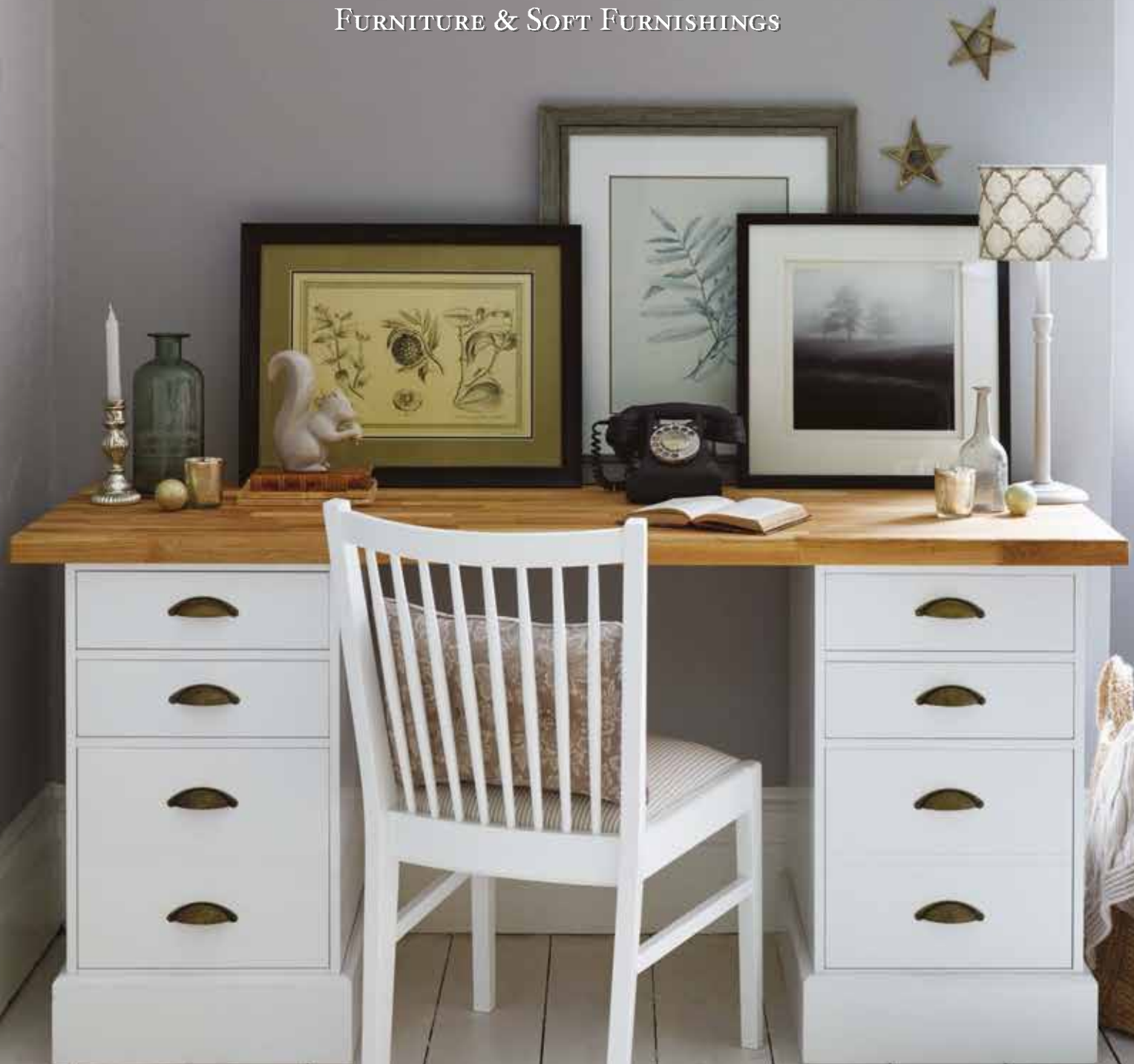
Other reception rooms need not have dramatic changes but, as detailed in the December issue of *The English Home*, small alterations to the sitting room layout, and the addition of a drinks trolley along with extra seating or ottomans, will make it easier to seat and serve guests.

It is also worth creating a desirable mood with candles and seasonal music, especially as this will create a pleasant surrounding for guests to relax in when you are detained in the kitchen or elsewhere.

In the dining room, setting the dining table with the Christmas dinner set saves time, as it will be in constant use over the celebrations. Arrange place settings in advance, especially as this may take some consideration as to where best to seat each guest. It is well worth personalising settings – even if this simply means selecting a plate with a fitting design for each person's taste – as this is a heartwarming way to make guests feel truly part of the immediate family. ■

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New Year HONOURS 2016



The English Home is delighted to present its second annual New Year Honours List, which celebrates the very best of innovative and collaborative design from companies both large and small.

The approach of a new calendar year feels like an appropriate time to look back over the past 12 months and recognise some of the inspirational launches that have stayed with us throughout the year.

We simply do not have enough pages to mention absolutely everything that has moved, excited and stimulated us over this past year, and the standard of design has made our choices very difficult indeed.

The companies, designers and ranges we have chosen are so diverse and creative that a traditional gold, silver and bronze structure would have felt too limiting and restrictive, so, instead, we have pinpointed the names in fabric, wallpaper, flooring, furniture, kitchens and bathrooms whose work over the past 12 months has particularly impressed us.

We have chosen three talented 'ones to watch' whose level of expertise and achievements so far make us excited for their future, and we give three cheers to those celebrating special anniversaries.

New this year, we also recognise the lifetime achievement of one especially influential and inspirational individual.

Enjoy our list, and here's to yet another year of divine design. ►



FABRIC COLLECTIONS

From innovative embroidered techniques to touchable textures, fabric brands continue to excite and inspire with new collections



*Kate Forman:
boho direction*

Above, left to right: Headboard in Jag linen with cushions in pink Angelique and dark pink Camille; curtain in Florence linen, all £62 a metre. Chair in pink Elodie cotton, £35 a metre, all Kate Forman.

*Hodsoll McKenzie:
English aesthetic*

Far left: Curtain in Milford linen, sofa in Weiland. Left: Chair in Tate Velvet, screen in Thompson Paisley. Fabrics from £68 a metre, Thompson and Remsen ranges by Hodsoll McKenzie.

Kate Forman

Expanding a much-admired brand is a tightrope walk, but Kate Forman has achieved this with aplomb. The bolder, boho alter ego of her new fabrics will appeal to both lovers of her 'heartland' French-inspired prints, as well as enticing a whole new audience. Forman neatly describes them as 'the downstairs companions' to her delicate 'upstairs' collections.

Hodsoll McKenzie

We highlight this elegantly timeless collection for its beautiful colour palette and incredibly versatile blend of prints, weaves and embroideries. The carefully curated range will instil the buyer with great confidence in mixing and matching across the entire collection to create for personal schemes to suit individual homes without fear of error.



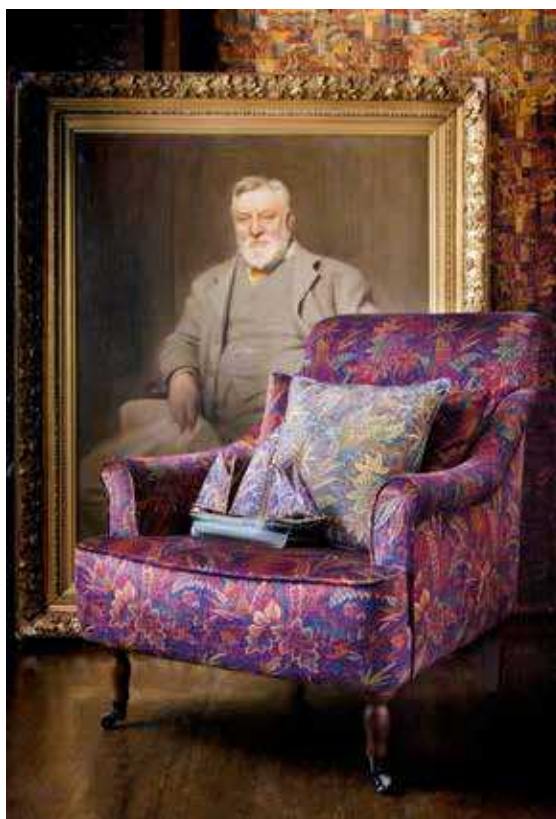
Guy Goodfellow: classical elegance

Left to right: Fez Weave, Garsington Print in Cognac, Fez Print, from £130 a metre, Guy Goodfellow collection from Redloh.



Liberty Art Fabrics Interiors: modern heritage

Secret Garden collection, from £80 a metre, Liberty.



Guy Goodfellow

With his impeccable eye for scale and hue, Guy Goodfellow's own-brand fabric range is created based on years of interior design experience at the highest level. His new Fez and Garsington prints are gorgeously versatile, complemented by the Fez Weave, all in soft, sophisticated tones, and inspired by textile fragments gathered from global travels.

Liberty Art Fabrics Interiors

The alluring richness of the printed velvets and the deliciously fluid drape and handle of the Floral Clay curtain fabric from Liberty won our admiration. Fabrics that demand to be touched as well as admired for good looks add invaluable layers of style to the interior (see our feature on page 108 for insights). These neatly offer heritage flavours that are usable in a modern way. ►



Kai: strokable style

Allegra collection, £46 a metre, Kai.

Kai

To see the Allegra printed and embossed velvets is to want to touch them, and the touch does not disappoint. Well priced, deliciously tactile, perfect for upholstery and available in 25 colourways.

Rapture & Wright

Inspired by the work of furniture designer and architect Ernest Gimson (1864-1919) the most recent launches from Rapture & Wright are a successful addition to a beautiful collection of screen-printed fabrics from this Gloucestershire-based studio with an artisan aesthetic that was founded by Rebecca Aird and Peter Thwaites in 2004.



Rapture & Wright: Arts & Crafts echoes

Below, left to right: Cloud Garden in Smoke, and in Vert de Gris colourways, £120 a metre; Maroc, in Cranberry colourway, £96 a metre, Rapture & Wright.





GP & J Baker: bold hues

Above, left to right: Curtain in Dryden fabric in Multi colourway; curtain in Farley Stripe with armchair in Kelway Velvet; cushion in Winton, from £59 a metre, all GP & J Baker.

GP & J Baker

The Cosmopolitan collection features global influences and artisan handblock prints but we particularly admire the bolder of the fabrics in the collection, specifically the burnt-orange velvet, the dense Winton weave, the Dryden Multi embroidery and the contemporary Farley Stripe with its beautiful interplay of textures.

Victoria Bain & Whistler Leather

An unexpected collaboration between Victorian Bain – known for her delicate embroidered textiles – and Whistler Leather, has resulted in a tactile new collection of embroidered leathers. The trellis and geometric designs shown here look particularly elegant and smart. ▶



Victoria Bain & Whistler Leather: embroidered leather

Custom-embroidered hide, from £250 a square foot, Victoria Bain for Whistler Leather.



Lewis & Wood: scaling service

Top: Petra in Moonstone, £169.20 a panel.
Above: Saskia in Blue Pearl, £56.40 a metre,
or £56.40 a square metre for scaling
(a service your interior designer could access).



Sanderson: ethnic modern

Above: Surin wallpaper. Right: Zagora wallpaper,
both £56 a roll, Sojourn collection.



WALLPAPERS

Scalable pattern, digital deconstructed prints and
mood-setting design motifs turn walls into statements

Lewis & Wood

Lewis & Wood is to be much commended for introducing an innovative bespoke service from its London showroom. This allows customers to rescale some of the existing wide-width wallpaper designs (Saskia, Alhambra, Womad, Rococo, Petra, Ipek Damask and Benaki), choose bespoke background colours on Jasper Peony, Indienne Tint, Saskia, and even pay to have many of the designs on a fabric texture or metallic wallpaper. These bespoke elements allow customers to create something individual and unique.

Farrow & Ball

Taking inspiration from the English countryside, the Hornbeam, Feather Grass and Blostma (the old English word for blossom) wallpaper designs offer a delicate modern touch for walls in sophisticated and unexpected colour combinations – printed with paint to perfectly match Farrow & Ball's paint range.

Sanderson

Ikats and ethnic ottoman-inspired motifs have been growing in popularity in fabric collections of late, including Sanderson's



Farrow & Ball: country

Above: Feather Grass wallpaper, £110 a roll.
Right: Hornbeam wallpaper, £95 a roll.



own attractive Sojourn collection. These wallpaper designs offer a smart way to complement ethnic-inspired fabrics in a modern-classic way.

Blackpop

“Elegantly distressed home furnishings that can make you feel like you’ve wandered into a lavish film production” is how independent British label Blackpop describes itself. Its collaboration with the National Portrait Gallery ‘The Tudors – Deconstructed’ is sumptuous and original, inspired by the rich tapestry of the past. ►



Blackpop: digital innovation

Above, left to right: Mary wallpaper; Henry wallpaper, both £175 a roll from Blackpop’s ‘The Tudors – Deconstructed’ in collaboration with the National Portrait Gallery.





Ben Pentreath & Quirky B

Lattice carpet in Flitcroft, £98.73 a square metre, Ben Pentreath collection for Quirky B at Alternative Flooring.



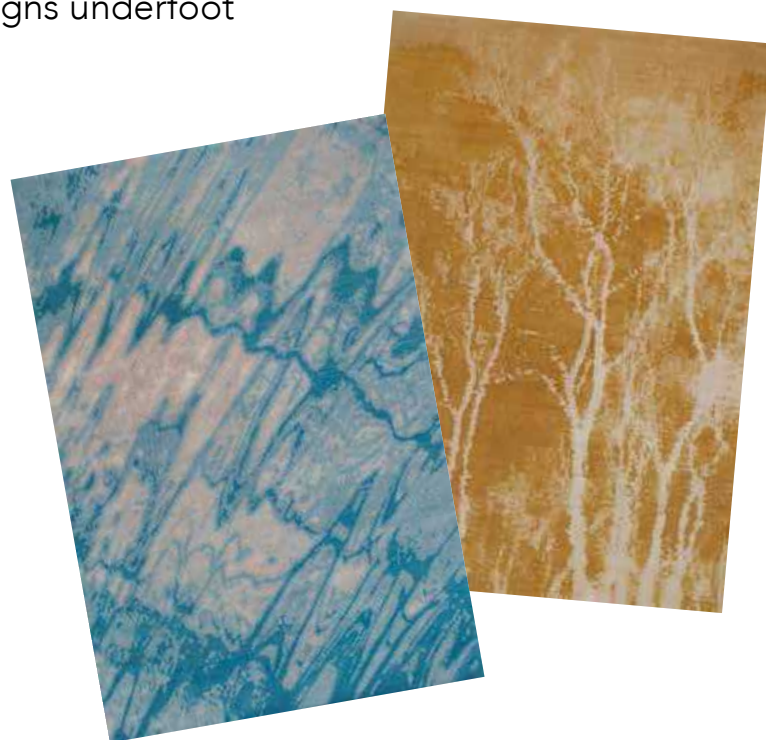
FABULOUS FLOORING

Sophisticated pattern, clever colour weaves and innovative finishes surprise and delight in desirable designs underfoot



Dash & Albert

Lexington striped rug, from £83; Arlington zigzag rug, from £95, Dash & Albert indoor/outdoor rugs.



Tania Johnson Design

Wave in Turquoise, £1,355 a square metre; Reflected Trees in Gold, from £1,230 a square metre, Tania Johnson Design.

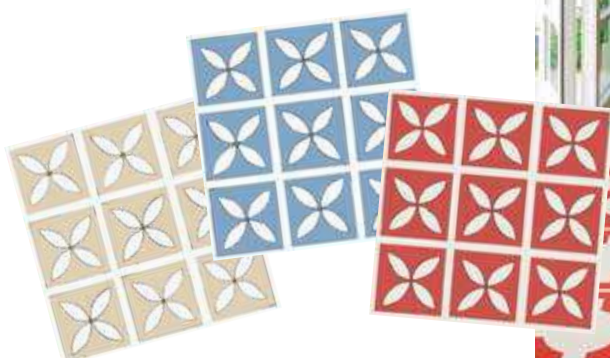


Flock: Gaia range of rugs

Arran wool and plant fibre rug in Aberdeen, £252 a square metre, Gaia collection at Flock.

Harvey Maria

Right: Parquet in Red Oxide from the Neisha Crosland collection. Below: Hay Field, Cornflower Blue and Cherry Red from Dee Hardwicke's Lattice range, all £42.95 a square metre, Harvey Maria.



Alternative Flooring –

Quirky B range by Ben Pentreath

Fusing country-house tradition with contemporary quirkiness and 70s echoes, this new range by Ben Pentreath features geometric patterns that cleverly trick the eye and play with space, creating rich textures. There are three designs (Cube, Tetra and Lattice), with four colourways available in each, and the carpets are woven in Britain on traditional Axminster looms.

Flock – Gaia range of rugs

Heritage-inspired tweed patterns, bold stripes, wave textures and striated textures using ombré-effect wool grace Flock's new Gaia range of handmade rugs. Seven original designs feature interwoven wool and plant fibres to create subtle and elegant patterns and detailing, with a colour palette spanning earthy neutrals and an attractively muted take on more colourful shades.

Harvey Maria – collaboration with Neisha Crosland & Dee Hardwicke

Luxury vinyl tiles are reinventing 'practical' flooring, and two collections from Harvey Maria caught our eye. The Neisha Crosland collection has a Celtic-inspired design in a new range of bold hues, and new designer Dee Hardwicke's Lattice range features hand-painted geometric tiles inspired by the petals of scattered flowers.

Tania Johnson Design –

Journeys in Colour range of rugs

Capturing the reflected nuances of nature with photography, and translating the subtle detail into intricately hand-knotted wool and silk rugs, Tania Johnson has created a harmonious and impressive collection with a strong story. All rugs can be made to order in any size or colour.

Dash & Albert – indoor/outdoor rugs

Made from eco-friendly PET, a recycled polyester weave that mimics the look and feel of woven wool, the Arlington and Lexington rugs and cushions from Dash & Albert are suitable for both indoor and outdoor use, with a playfully chic design as well as durability. ▶



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Bethan Gray: Private Collection

Above, left to right: Band side table, £2,220; Stud side table, £1,620, Bethan Gray Private Collection.



Paolo Moschino for Nicholas Haslam: Barnsley table

Barnsley dining table, £4,690.



Scumble Goosie: double bow-fronted chest

Double bow-fronted chest, from £1,157.

Bethan Gray

Welsh designer Bethan Gray's leather and marble Private Collection celebrates a love of tactile textures and immaculate attention to detail, from elegant stitching to a delicious colour palette going from blush to jade to coral.

Paolo Moschino for Nicholas Haslam

This spectacular dining table typifies Paolo Moschino's consistently reliable style and flair, with patterned bone inlay top in black and ivory colours, and solid-wood base with ebonised finish.

Stuart Scott Associates

The Fleure sofa's exquisite fluting and eye-catching design commands attention. Built to order by hand in England, hand-signed and individually numbered, it has a solid beech frame with finish options in oak, walnut and brass.

Scumble Goosie

This dreamily curvaceous chest of drawers began as a bespoke commission, but it was so popular it has become part of the main collection. Built from sustainable hardwood, a painted finish is optional, but looks 'country chic' in the raw. ▶

FURNITURE

Exquisite inlay, perfect stitching and undulating curves captivate with these eye-catching pieces



Stuart Scott Associates: Fleure sofa

Fleure sofa in Kingfisher cotton velvet, legs in machine-turned solid brass, £3,950.





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Martin Brudnizki for Drummonds

Double Derwent Light, from £570; Double Ladybower basin, from £7,860, Drummonds.



Neptune: kitchens

Neptune offers four kitchen designs – three painted and one wooden. Prices start from £8,000 for a fitted kitchen. Above is the Henley range, starting from £12,000.



KITCHENS & BATHROOMS

Collaborative style benefits and an eye to budget impressed us in this category's final shortlist

deVOL

Founded 27 years ago by two design graduates from Loughborough University, deVOL's bespoke design-led craftsmanship caught influential eyes and propelled this small company into growth. Now producing bespoke kitchens, interiors and bathrooms designed and built in England, and expanding into the American market due to customer demand, deVOL's recent collaboration with young craftsman Sebastian Cox is a highlight.

Martin Brudnizki for Drummonds

This elegantly understated range of bathroomware and accessories, designed by interior designer Martin Brudnizki in collaboration with Drummonds, is just as impeccable and luxurious as one would

hope. Standout pieces include the Double Derwent Light, which features two symmetrical hand-blown reeded glass shades pinched in the middle to create a bow shape. Channelling vintage luxe, it can be mounted horizontally or vertically, and is also available with a single shade. It is a perfect complement to the Ladybower vanity basin from this collaboration.

Neptune

A quality kitchen is always worth investment, but when budget does not allow for the smart luxury of a bespoke fit, it is difficult to beat Neptune for the lovely look and detail of its accessibly priced kitchen designs – especially in the wooden finish, which is hard to achieve at these prices. Prices start from £8,000. ►



deVOL

The Sebastian Cox kitchen by deVOL, starting from £15,000.



Designer and craftsman Sebastian Cox in his workshop in Greenwich, London.



Golden Pheasant velvet in Rusty Red, £90 a metre, Angela Faulkner.



Chiltern and Wicker fabrics in new colourways, both £96 a metre, Fermoie.

ONES TO WATCH

Refreshing, original and innovative: excitement and anticipation surround this talented trio of brands



Sebastian Cox

Sir Terence Conran said of this young designer and craftsman: “I have been making furniture for 60 years, but I’m still learning from Sebastian.”

Aged 29, Sebastian Cox, combines a fascination with nature, a devotion to wood and innate curiosity and inventiveness with exquisite craftsmanship and a passion for making beautiful and functional objects that last a lifetime.

Using often-overlooked sustainable hardwoods such as coppiced hazel, Cox’s creations are simple in form, yet with a fine attention to detail, and they vary in subtle texture, showing the hand of the maker. Cox wants his furniture to engage people with how the pieces were made, what they are made of and where those raw materials came from.

Recent stylish collaborations with the likes of deVOL have brought Cox to the attention of a wider audience, and won him even more fans.

Angela Faulkner

A talented artist in her own right, capturing in watercolours the delicate beauty of her home-grown flowers, Angela Faulkner’s colourful paintings naturally lent themselves to greetings cards before progressing into homewares, gifts and her latest adventure: a foray into textiles.

Her painterly eye and passion for horticulture lend a vivid warmth and authenticity to her creations, endearing them to gardeners in particular, but more broadly to anyone who has an appreciation for the natural world.

We first featured her in the April issue of *The English Home*, singling out for praise her luscious, digitally-printed velvet Tulip, which led to a flurry of orders.

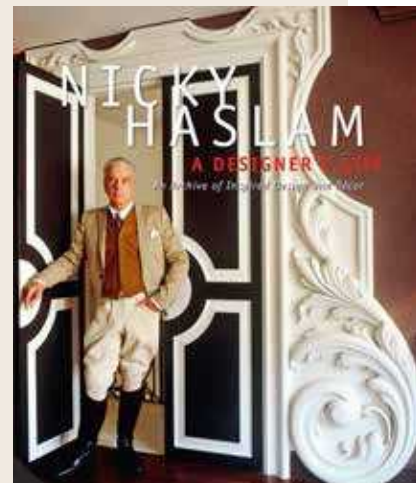
Spending her childhood in the hills of Worcestershire and the years since in the beautiful South Shropshire countryside has given Faulkner a lifelong undimmed wonderment of Mother Nature, which we can now bring into our homes.

Fermoie

Founded by the duo who spearheaded Farrow & Ball in the 1990s and masterminded its rise as a household name, Fermoie is a premium textiles business that eschews digital printing to print all of its fabrics in its own factory in Marlborough, Wiltshire, using traditional methods.

Pronounced ‘Fermoy’ after its namesake town in County Cork, there is a distinctly British feel to the elegant assortment of fabrics, cushions and lampshades, and a wide variety of possibilities: 140 rich colourways designed within families of reds, greens, blues, yellows and neutrals.

Its founders, Martin Ephson and Tom Helme, had long desired to venture into fabrics ever since the beginning of their partnership, but did not feel they had enough time to do so properly until now. They print with a light touch, using pigments to create a subtle impression, but with the depth of a woven fabric.



BOOKS

- *A Designer's Life* (2014, Jacqui Small Publishing)
- *Folly de Grandeur* (2013, (Jacqui Small Publishing)
- *Redeeming Features: A Memoir* (2009, Knopf & Jonathan Cape)
- *Sheer Opulence* (2002, Cico Books)

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Nicky Haslam

A celebration of life in interior design



Ask any fledgling student of interiors to name a select few of the most renowned and respected designers in the world and Nicky Haslam's name will unquestionably come to the fore. A charismatic figure with a witty, glamorous and 'seductive' aesthetic, his design skills and opinions have been widely sought for decades by a stellar client list (from Mick Jagger to Bryan Ferry to Charles Saatchi and Rupert Everett) and by the most authoritative interior magazines, including *Veranda*, *Architectural Digest* and *The English Home*.

It is 44 years since the Eton-educated, Haslam first started practicing as an

interior designer in 1972. In the late 1980s he founded his London-based architectural and design firm, NH Design. As his own career has grown and flourished, he has also worked with and mentored names who have become huge talents in their own rights, including Cath Kidston, Kirstie Allsopp, Justin Van Breda and Paolo Moschino.

His pace and appetite for design and life remain, and, in addition to interior design projects, Haslam is also widely recognised as a socialite, artist, columnist and author. In 2009 he launched his first eponymous, gothic-influenced furniture collection in

collaboration with Oka. In 2012, his fabric range was launched in collaboration with Turnell & Gigon.

His four books offer tempting and revealing insights into his design projects, his watercolour talents, and into a world in which he drank cocktails with Cole Porter, shared Christmas with Min Hogg, worked for Diana Vreeland at *Vogue* and lives a dual life in London and his beautiful country home – the Hunting Lodge – which was formerly occupied by another of England's most influential decorators, John Fowler. His is truly a most colourful and inspirational life in design. ►



Morris & Co.

Honeysuckle & Tulip wallpaper in Charcoal & Gold,
£65 a roll, Morris & Co.



THREE CHEERS TO...

We doff our cap to three design forces celebrating
landmark anniversaries of 255 years between them



CP Hart

The luxury designer bathroom company is celebrating
the 40th anniversary of its flagship Waterloo showroom.



Sir Terence Conran

2016 marks 60 years since Sir Terence
Conran founded Conran Design Studio.

Morris & Co.

In 1861, 27-year-old William Morris and a group of like-minded friends started a business providing beautiful hand-crafted products and furnishings for the home, taking a controversial stand against the machine age by celebrating and preserving traditional craftsmanship and techniques.

Today, 155 years later, Morris & Co. is renowned worldwide for producing beautiful and unmistakable fabric and wallpaper, and is still a beacon for quality and traditional values. One of the most outstanding and influential designers of the Arts and Crafts Movement, many still hold dear to Morris's famous adage: "Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful."

Sir Terence Conran

Visionary designer Sir Terence Conran founded the Conran Design Studio 60 years ago in 1956. He revolutionised the British high street by bringing intelligent, modern design within reach of the general population. Dedicated to democratisation of design, and a lover of clean, simple lines – exemplified by furniture shop Habitat, which he founded in 1964 – he popularised modernism and his influence is still evident today in the look of our homes, the way we shop, the things we shop for and our eating-out habits. Britain's best-known designer, now aged 84, he founded the Design Museum in London to showcase British design.

CP Hart

South-London builder Charles Percival Hart founded his firm in 1937, battling through wartime and austerity to build the business with his sons John and Tom, establishing an exemplary reputation for service and expertise. Pinpointing unfulfilled needs in the bathroom industry, this family business looked abroad to source and adapt exclusive items for UK customers. The company's vast flagship showroom under the arches in Waterloo, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary, offers the perfect stage to showcase their impressive portfolio of products. ■

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In touch WITH TEXTURE

Discreet and unassuming, texture has been design's unsung hero for too long, but the newest fabrics, floors, furniture and wallcoverings give interiors a new dimension



No one who has walked across a thickly carpeted floor, stroked the smooth arm of a leather chair or felt a tingle of pleasure when climbing into a bed made up with crisp cotton sheets would deny the importance of texture in interiors. Where colour and pattern appeal to the eye, texture satisfies the sense of touch, literally creating rooms that ‘feel’ good.

Every component of every interior has a texture, but often it is overlooked in favour of the more dominant elements of colour and pattern. Playing it up by combining and contrasting materials and adding tactile accents will give decorating schemes a feeling of depth and an added layer of interest. With lots of innovative new ways of adding multiple layers of texture to one piece, whether in fabrics, wallcoverings, lighting or furniture, the possibilities for creating interiors that appeal to all the senses are endless.

SOFT TOUCH

Textiles and texture are inextricably linked. Not only do the fibres from which they are made have their own distinctive look and feel, but the way they are spun, woven, felted or otherwise formed into fabric has an effect on the finished cloth, too. Designers such as Joanna Wood make the most of these characteristics. “I love layering different kinds of fabric,” she says. “I would never use the same style of cloth throughout a scheme – too much of one thing can devalue it. The perfect mixture is wool, weave, linen and silk. Putting

together fabrics that are flat, bobbly and reflective gives a rich overall effect and combining the plain with the beautiful ensures a balanced end result.”

Introducing texture through fabric is not new. From medieval times tapestry, damask and brocade decorated the homes of those who could afford them to be joined in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by luxurious embossed gaufrage velvets and jacquard weaves. Textiles made using these traditional methods are still produced by companies such as Watts of Westminster and Northcroft Fabrics, but designers at the forefront of modern design are taking texture to a new level, using modern technology and familiar crafting methods to create cloth that is a visual and tactile treat. Creation Baumann’s collection of semi-transparent fabrics employs laser cutting, burn-out and heat embossing, together with patchwork and appliqué, to create three-dimensional panels in sophisticated, contemporary designs. The Bohemian Travels collection by Mulberry Home takes the opposite approach, combining patchwork, appliqué, embroidery and vivid colour in dazzling folk-art style. Between the two, there are many fabrics with a decorative weave, pile or surface finish that deliver texture in a quieter but no less effective way.

WALL TALK

Many designers do not restrict their use of textiles to soft furnishings, but apply them to the walls, too. The traditional method is to stretch the fabric across ►

ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT

Diamond shapes cut from scorched oak and still bearing the saw marks fit together to give this cabinet a tactile surface. Tesselate console, £7,380; lamps and shades, all Porta Romana

Embroidery enhances the texture of leather. Custom embroidered footstools from £2,050, Victoria Bain Embroidered Textiles at Whistler Leather

A mix of contrasting materials gives tactile and visual interest. Mika wool and plant fibre mix rug, £252 a square metre, Flock

OPPOSITE

Two-tone relief designs provide discreet, yet tactile, pattern. Tippolo yarn dyed cut velvet jacquard, £94 a metre, William Yeoward



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE The metallic finish applied to the angular surface of this cabinet reflects light in different ways. *Talitha credenza in hand stamped nickel-plated metal on wood, £3,950, Jonathan Adler.* These stucco panels were modelled in situ. *Geoffrey Preston works to commission and projects are priced individually* Dome-head brass nails give these upholstered doors a panelled look. *Doors by NBB*

walls lined with cotton padding, which baffles sound and gives a feeling of warmth and luxury. Designer Niloufar Bakhtiar-Bakhtiari of NBB Design uses a similar technique to cover doors. “I hate hard cupboard doors,” she says, “but the moment you cover them with fabric, it gives the room a feeling of softness.” It is an effect that is particularly valuable in the bedroom and bathroom. Elsewhere in the house, Bakhtiar-Bakhtiari often chooses horse-hair fabric to cover room dividers and room doors. “It is a very tough fibre with three or four tones, so the colour never looks flat and I use decorative nailing to recreate the panelled style.”

Another way to apply fabric to walls is to use paper-backed textiles, which are then hung in the same way as wallpaper. James Hare will produce wallcoverings from many of the silks in the range but cautions that, because the fibre is natural, irregularities in the weave and colour are inevitable and there will be visible joins between panels. The same can be said

of grasscloth, another designer favourite, which is actually a wallcovering made from hemp, sea grass, bamboo and raffia, among other species. These can be dyed in distinctly un-natural hues where a scheme demands colour as well as texture. For a varied selection, try Phillip Jeffries. Maya Romanoff’s marquetry in veneers is also paper-backed to provide a highly decorative alternative to traditional panelling.

Wallcoverings that owe more to technology than to nature come with suede or velvet effects that absorb the light, or shiny foil or beaded surfaces that reflect it. Both of these options feature in the ranges of mainstream and specialist manufacturers. Relief wallcoverings in contemporary designs can be found at Elitis, where heat embossing and repoussé are used to mould synthetic materials into decorative surfaces, which are available in coloured or metallic finishes. These flexible coverings can be hung like wallpaper, but if the drama of very high relief wall decoration is desired, rigid materials can provide it. Tiles are ►



ABOVE Leather can be used in many ways to add warmth and texture. Here, it has been applied to doors, architraves, skirtings and frames; the decorative wall panels are upholstered in leather, laser-cut to reveal the black silk lining beneath.

All by Alma

LEFT The ancient technique of Venetian polished plaster is a bespoke treatment to achieve multiple textural finishes with an intriguing patina for walls.

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usually associated with kitchens and bathrooms, but many of the designs produced by Ann Sacks in stone-like matt finishes or coloured and metallic glazes can be used elsewhere in the home to clad a feature wall or chimney breast. For three-dimensional decoration with a warmer touch, consider Fardis' Impression Panels. Made from MDF, these panels are sculpted with a repeating geometric or rippled design and supplied raw, ready for painting, or with a coloured finish. Brackets make for easy wall mounting.

GROUND WORK

A well-chosen floor is the foundation of any room scheme and most flooring materials are inherently textural. Wood, one of the most popular, has a natural grain that varies depending on the species of tree from which it came. Sometimes the wood surface is brushed to remove the softer fibres and give the grain greater definition, an effect that can be further enhanced by liming or staining the wood. A more unusual technique is employed by Element 7 which combines metal and wood in floors, often chosen for dining rooms or hallways. "The wood can be totally or ►

ABOVE Helen Amy Murray's hand-sculpted relief designs in leather or textiles are a beautiful decorative feature, bringing an added layer of tactile quality to this bedroom.

LEFT Contrast textures by teaming warm-to-the-touch textured shagreen with cool glass. *Barrington faux shagreen and aged brass occasional table, £1,062; Fellini glass lamp base in distressed silver, £505, Julian Chichester*



ABOVE The Ajiro collection by Maya Romanoff for Altfield features exquisite wallcoverings using fine wood veneers to create intricate marquetry providing an alternative to timber panelling. *Left to right: Coffers parquet wallcovering, £196 a metre; Fanfare wood veneer wallcovering, £284 a metre; Marquetry wallcovering, £212 a metre, all Maya Romanoff for Altfield*

partially covered with metal,” says sales director Jago Anderson. “With partially covered wood, the metal goes into the surface and the effect can be subtle or striking depending on the style of grain.”

Just as luxurious, but softer to the touch, leather flooring looks and smells wonderful, and ages beautifully. It is a favourite for bedrooms and dressing rooms but performs well in busier areas of the home, too. “Our flooring calf is designed specifically for the purpose and is very hardwearing,” says Tisha Richbell, operations director at leather specialist Alma. “Treat it with as much care as a parquet floor and don’t allow people to walk on it in stiletto heels. In a high-traffic area, we recommend choosing a printed leather, such as a crocodile as the print will conceal marks.”

The easiest way to introduce texture at floor level is with a rug, and many contemporary makers are exploring the design potential of surface effects. Combining yarns such as wool, silk, bamboo silk and Tibetan nettle fibre, that are variously lustrous or matt, subtly defines patterns. Changes in pile length or style, loop and cut are used to create a variety of effects, from outlining design elements to creating the look and feel of beautifully timeworn antiques.

FURNITURE IN FOCUS

When it forms the background to a scheme, texture is a real scene setter, but bring it to the forefront and it becomes the star of the show. Furniture makers have always understood the value of texture, and

cabinetmakers of the past used inlay, marquetry, carving and gilding to embellish fine furniture.

Although they may not always use the same methods, craftsmen working today employ an array of surface finishes that put their cabinets, tables and lighting in the luxury league. The finishes Simon Orrell applies to his furniture have a transformative effect capable of turning one of his deceptively simple tables or cabinets into a perfect jewel of a piece. “We specialise in finishes that were popular in the Art Deco period, such as shagreen, parchment, mica and straw marquetry, to produce a look that is modern and clean,” he says. Some of the materials Orrell uses seem unconventional to those not in the know, and his ability to create a refined marble-smooth crackle finish from eggshells seems little short of alchemy.

By contrast, lighting and occasional furniture maker Porta Romana has recently unveiled a collection that explores a rugged industrial aesthetic. Shazeen Emambux, the company’s senior buyer, says, “In the Elemental collection we use metals to produce something that is rough and quite Jurassic in character.” The distressed effects are achieved by chemical treatment and, because of that, no two pieces are identical. “Some display earthy patination alongside polished metal, and the juxtaposition enhances the texture of both,” says Emambux. Whether you are choosing floor coverings or fabrics, wallcoverings or furniture finishes, ‘combine and contrast’ is surely key to using texture successfully. ■

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LITTLE BLACK BOOK

ROBERT KIME

A master of creating invitingly comfortable rooms that combine seemingly disparate objects, antiques dealer and fabric designer Robert Kime reveals a few favoured resources for inspiration

Where do you search for antiques?

I love to explore the old markets near my house in France – L'Isle sur la Sorgue is a favourite – and also when visiting Italy or Egypt I always make for the nearest market or souk. Nearer home, I also enjoy an early Saturday morning rummage around Portobello Road, where you can still find interesting antiques at sensible prices. I am fortunate in having been at this game for so long that sole-trader dealers – 'runners' as they are known – come to me and offer treasures from the boot of their cars.

Can you reveal your favoured resources for fabrics and wall coverings?

When I first started decorating I re-used old curtains, weaves or fabrics, which I always felt had more wear, faded charm and richer colours than anything modern. It then became necessary to reproduce some of these, and also find other sources of inspiration from old fragments I had collected. I once bought an unusual Turkish kandelli print that was being worn as a headscarf by a woman sitting in front

of me on a bus in Ankara. One of my recent prints, 'Kala' was inspired by a beautiful Iznik tile, and my wallpaper 'Opera', by my wife's Fortuny opera coat. I may begin with a fabric and turn it into a paper or vice versa.

Which buildings or places inspire you?

The British Museum, which is two minutes' walk from my home, is a constant source of inspiration and one of the wonders of the world. I have recently returned from Jerusalem, and the Israel Museum, which has just celebrated its fiftieth birthday, was a revelation: a marvellous breadth of history, from antiquity to the modern day, and outstandingly presented. Sir John Soane's Museum is also a short walk [from my home] and that is a real eye trainer for anyone interested in the decorative arts, architecture or design.

What new collections do you admire?

I don't buy anyone else's fabrics or papers because I produce a wide range of my own. Paint colours I also have mixed by a specialist, but I do use Little Greene and Farrow & Ball. Farrow & Ball's Skylight and Pale Powder are colours that show off artwork very well; I have both in my Museum Street showroom.

What are your favourite new buys?

Fairly recently I bought a 17th-century lead statue of Bacchus at the Christie's sale of Sir Albert Richardson. [It was] in a very sorry state but with the aid of a brilliant restorer – Hugo Smith of the Bulbeck Foundry – it was brought back to its former glory.

I found a marvellous carved marble wine cooler or cistern with bronze handles at Masterpiece in the summer, very much in the manner of William Kent and dating to about 1740. I collect the watercolours of Edward Lear and always delight in a new find.

LEFT The Paris lamp was originally designed by Kime to be used beside a four-poster bed, but it can also be used on walls and bookcases. Paris Lamp, £475, Robert Kime

BELOW The British Museum was founded in the 18th century.

BOTTOM RIGHT Kime finds inspiration all around for his fabrics and wallpapers.

Kala fabric in gold and silver, £90 a metre; Opera wallpaper, £125 for a 10m roll, all Robert Kime



Do you have a favourite lighting brand?

I buy many old light fittings and have reproduced and adapted the most versatile and attractive ones. My Paris Lamp is very useful to have beside a bed (above).

Is there a book you regularly refer to?

The reference book that is a must have is Owen Jones' seminal design resource work, *The Grammar of Ornament*, published in 1856. My favourite Jones quotation is: 'Form without colour is like a body without a soul'. ■

BY DEFINITION: CURTAINING

The correct choice of curtain treatment can have an enormous impact upon the design of a room. Here is a brief introduction to some of the essential terms

CURTAIN POLES

Apart from very specialist, bespoke window treatments, the majority of curtains will be hung either on tracks or on poles, which may be corded and motorised or drawn by hand. There are dozens of different options available, from slim cafe rods, designed to be hung at the halfway point of the window; gently curved poles (sometimes known as a French return), designed for the avoidance of a gap between the curtain and the wall, and drapery arms or portiere rods, designed for doors and dormer windows. Many companies also offer poles designed in sections for bay windows.

CURTAIN TRACKS

Tracks are particularly versatile and may be fixed either to a vertical surface (wall or baton or lath) or to a horizontal surface, such as a ceiling or the top of an alcove, into which specially designed gliders are attached on which to hang the curtains. This will usually be concealed behind a pelmet or fascia. Tracks may either be made from light, flexible PVC – which is inexpensive and suitable for light to medium-weight curtains – or from a metal, such as aluminium or steel. Aluminium offers both strength and flexibility – it can be bent for use with curved or bay windows – whilst steel is more suitable for the heaviest of curtains. Steel is naturally rigid, so can only be used for bays when created to length and used in sections.

LATH & FASCIA

A sleek, elegant fixing suitable for either straight or bay windows, which fits snugly to the window surround, blocking out any unwanted light. The tracking system is neatly concealed behind a fascia or small pelmet, which is often covered in the same fabric as the curtains, covering the gap between the track and the wall, creating a seamless effect.

FULLNESS

The fullness of the fabric is dictated by the chosen heading: gathered, goblet and cartridge headings require fabric of up to two-and-a-half times the width of the track or pole, whilst a triple pleat may need two-and-three-quarter times. Eyelet and wave headings need only double the width of the window span, or even slightly less.

DROP

The drop refers to the total length from the top of the heading to the hem. This will include any additional material required to allow for pooling or puddling on the floor – anything from two to eight inches.

HEM WEIGHTS

Small weights may be sewn into the vertical seams and at the corners of each curtain panel to ensure an even hemline and hang. Chain weights are small, heavy beads strung in a line, which also perform the same function.

HEADINGS

The type of heading chosen will dictate the fullness and drape of the curtains, and also the quantity of fabric required. Most modern headings are created using proprietary heading tape, however hand-sewn headings, created using plain buckram tape for stiffness, are sometimes ►



ABOVE LEFT Pinch pleats (also known as French or triple pleats) offer a middle ground between the formal and the informal. *Made to measure curtains in Pretty Maids fabric, £48 a metre, Vanessa Arbuthnott*

ABOVE RIGHT Softly gathered curtains on a painted pole work particularly well with pretty floral fabrics for a romantic, feminine feel. *Curtains in Hatley raspberry fabric, £48 a metre, Cabbages & Roses*

Juxtaposing a contrasting design in a complementary pattern or hue for the leading edges recreates an elegant tailored look. *Curtains in Marquee, £30 a metre; leading edge in Clarity, £30 a metre, both from the Bellevue collection, Blendworth*





used to achieve bespoke, tailored headings. Goblet and cartridge headings are employed for a classic, formal look, whilst gathered headings, such as pinch pleat (also known as a French pleat), twin and triple pleat offer a country feel. Ruffle-top and flop-over headings add a further decorative dimension. Wave, eyelet and tab-top headings provide a more contemporary feel, demanding a smaller quantity of fabric for a sleeker look. Sheers are usually hung directly onto the pole or curtain rod with a rod pocket or narrow casing sewn into the top of the curtain in lieu of a heading.

LEADING EDGE

The central edge of each curtain panel, meeting when curtains are drawn (the opposite side is known as the return edge). The leading edge is sometimes designed in a contrast fabric for further appeal.

LINING AND INTERLINING

In addition to the standard white or ivory cotton or polycotton curtain lining, thermal and blackout linings are also widely available, providing extra insulation and lightproofing. Alternatively, a contrast fabric or selflining may be used if the curtain is visible from the outside. Bump or interlining is a soft, thick, flannel or felt-like fabric placed between the curtain and lining to add body and insulation.

PASSEMENTERIE

A French term used to describe a range of decorative cords, trims, tassels and edging bands used to give definition and detail. ■

ABOVE An elegant brass tieback and tasselled trim add a theatrical note to a classic weave.

Curtain in Templeton, £140 a metre; cast-brass laurel wreath tieback, £358, both Robert Kime

RIGHT A pelmet of gently scalloped flutes with cut fringing applied to the hem transforms plain linen curtains into an elegant window dressing.

Curtains in Medium Weight Natural Linen, £38 a metre, Inchyra

BELOW Decorative finials come in a wide range of shapes, materials and finishes. *Baroco Fluted Urn finial, from £120, The Bradley Collection*



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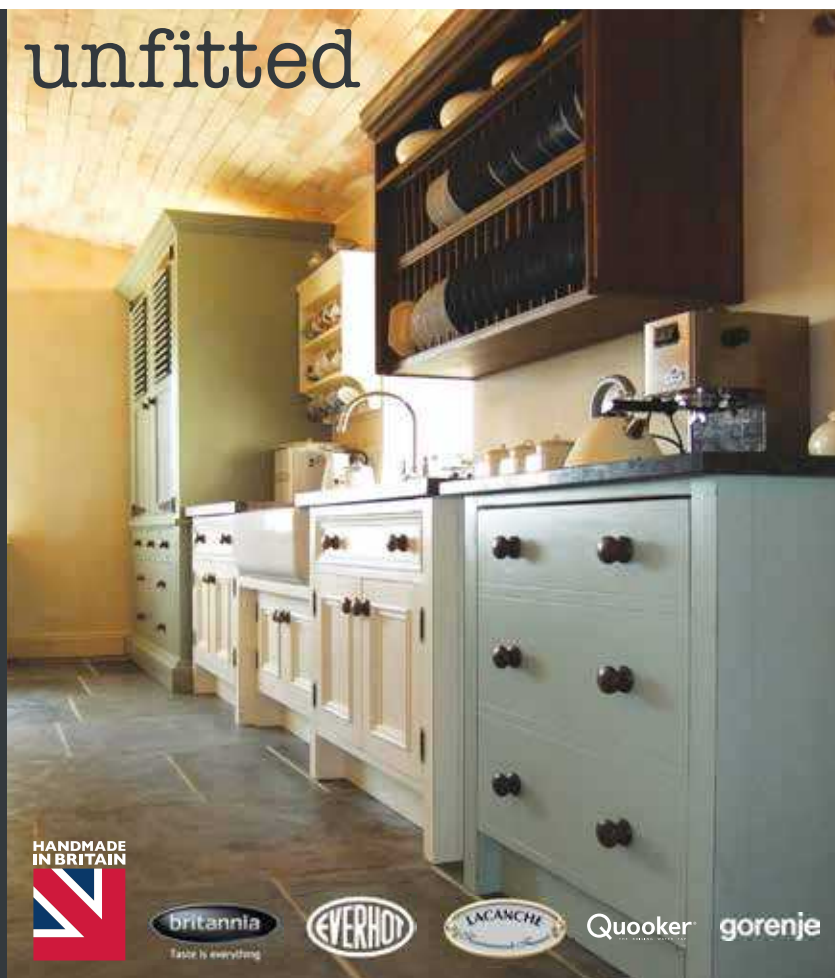
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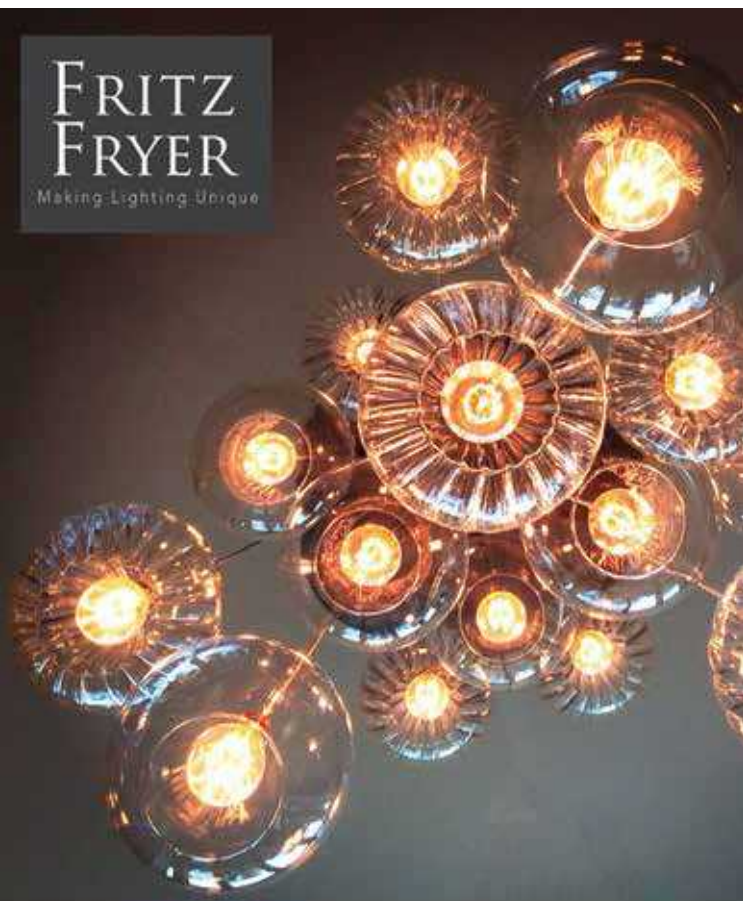


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SIZE AND VARIETY

Sizes vary, from 90cm or 100cm to 120cm and beyond with a bespoke solution. “A typical 90cm twin-cavity cooker would offer a 52-litre main oven and 28-litre secondary oven,” explains Michael Haigh of Britannia Living. “Increase the width by 10cm and your secondary oven increases to a generous 42 litres. Twin models are ideal for busy families and home chefs, as there is total flexibility with a multifunction oven and static (auxiliary) oven. Some brands also offer a rotisserie, perfect for the Sunday roast. A separate grill compartment

is also ideal for food that requires short grilling times. Anything longer will achieve better results with a fan-assisted function.”

Michael adds that all-electric is growing in popularity due to its easy-clean finish and the growth in induction, which is more responsive than gas and therefore more economical. “Dual energy, on the other hand, is perfect for the serious cook,” he says. “The gas hob offers numerous benefits along with a choice of gas and fanned gas for cooking bread and meat, and multifunction electric for delicate dishes or batch baking.”

“When you don’t have the space, take a look at the smaller models now available,” adds Laura James, Aga brand ambassador. “The Aga City60 for example, offers all the benefits of a cast-iron range cooker but is only 60cm wide. It has roasting and simmering ovens and a hotplate that can be used for boiling and simmering as well as a warming surface.”

COUNTRY COOK

If natural gas is not available, many manufacturers have cookers with LPG jets, whilst oil-fired ranges can be used to heat the home and fire up the hot water supply. For some, the option to use their cooker to heat the home has great appeal. “If you are doing a whole house project, which includes updating the boiler, it makes sense to look at range cookers that can also run a central heating system,” explains Laura James. “This is particularly true in smaller houses, where precious space could be taken up by an unattractive boiler. The Rayburn Heatranger models provide the perfect solution, with the capability to run up to 15 radiators.”

Cast-iron heat-storage range cookers will suit home cooks of all levels, as they are incredibly forgiving. Radiant heat cooking ensures that food is treated gently, locking in flavour, moisture and goodness for reliable results. Cast-iron cookers can also offer the latest technology, as demonstrated by the Aga iTotal Control, which looks like a traditional Aga but can be switched on and off via a smartphone app. ▶

TOP LEFT Each La Cornue is custom-designed, hand-built and finished to order. The Château 120 in brushed stainless steel with polished chrome trim starts from £21,750. **TOP RIGHT** Available in white, cream, matt black, racing green, regal blue and cranberry, this Classic 100 model from Rangemaster has a five-zone induction hob and is priced £2,150. **BELOW** The Delphi 100cm dual-fuel stainless-steel range from Britannia has a host of features, including programmable meat probe, and is priced around £3,351.





ADDED BENEFITS

Telescopic shelves; warming drawers; a robust build; accessories such as teppanyaki griddles, programmable food probe, and multifunction cooking are all features to look out for. Another benefit to keep in mind is a self-cleaning function. Sometimes called pyrolytic cleaning, this special programme burns off dirt and grease to leave a fine ash, which simply needs to be swept away. “The latest functions include turbo defrost,” adds Danny Lay of Caple, “which uses fan power at room temperature to cut defrosting times in half. Top plus fan heat will finish off a cooked dish, whilst base heat will reheat cooked food or keep meals warm.”

EFFICIENT THINKING

For energy efficiency, check the energy rating of the ovens and consider cost-effective eco options, such as Esse’s 13AMP electric model or Eurostove’s woodburning design. “Our 13AMP cooker has the authentic solidity of a cast-iron range with modern control, continuous high performance and extremely low running costs,” says Mark Blewitt of Esse. “We also have a flueless gas model, favoured by the River Cottage team, that can be programmed to come up to temperature in time for your arrival home from work. There are also ranges that deliver piping-hot water and household warmth with thermostatic control to maintain temperature. If you



TOP LEFT Wolf’s ICBDF606CG dual-fuel range comes with charbroiler and griddle/teppanyaki. Priced at £20,256, added features include pyrolytic self-cleaning. **TOP RIGHT** Esse has an innovative 13-amp heat-storage cooker, which Esse advises costs just £1 a day to run. The EL 13AMP, £6,175, is a plug-in design that can be positioned anywhere. **ABOVE** The electric Aga Dual Control offers added flexibility over traditional cookers with reduced running and servicing costs. From £9,775 for a three-oven model.

have your own wood supply, there are woodburning cookers that could virtually take you off-grid.”

INSTALLATION

During installation, there are certain elements to consider, as Owain Harrison of Hoover Candy Baumatic explains. “First and foremost, a hardwire installation should be completed by a qualified electrician and a gas connection must be completed and signed off by a Gas Safe installer. Any range cooker must also be secured to the wall behind it, using a safety chain and hook, to prevent it tipping over.”

BESPOKE DESIGN

For something really special, La Cornue individually build the entire stove to order, as CEO Xavier Dupuy, explains, “Each La Cornue is custom-designed, hand-built and finished to order. So beyond the exceptional performance of our ovens, there is also an exceptional choice of looks. In the past, we’ve colour-matched our finishes to everything from a vintage BMW to a set of fine china that our customer inherited from her grandmother.”

Whichever the chosen style or design of range cooker, they are likely to provide years of joy at the heart of a home. ■

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QUINTESSENTIALLY

Inspiration for seasonal pastimes, to make the most of life at home, starts here ►

LET IT SNOW

Children across the land keep a wistful watch on winter skies hoping for signs of an impending sprinkling of white. Woe betide the parent or grandparent who is not prepared with woolly mittens, snow boots and, of course, a sledge. Whilst a tray may echo make-do methods of past childhoods, these handsome vintage toboggans cannot help but add a special frisson to the occasion. And, if it does not snow? Well, they make a jolly attractive focal point for a country hallway, nonetheless.

Vintage sledges from Europe, from £58 each, RE





Sparkling EVENING

Glamorous decorations arranged, candles softly flickering and delicious morsels circulating... we suggest building up to midnight on New Year's Eve with a tremendous celebration

LEFT This beautiful party table was created by Fiona Leahy Design, a high-end creative event design and production agency. Florist Joanna Rhodes advises, "The key to a fabulous tablescape is to vary the heights of the individual components to create depth and interest. Groups of single flower varieties in a selection of stylish glassware, perfectly placed along the table, can create truly breathtaking displays."

The tone and level of formality of any party is traditionally set by the style of invite. Therefore, it is important to consider the manner of invite carefully. For example, a phone invitation denotes a very informal get together, where one would assume there is no dress code. Written invites should ideally be sent out around six weeks beforehand. However, as people often arrange their New Year celebrations well in advance, a phone call ahead of the paper invite – to 'save the date' – may be advisable.

Vague dress codes cause confusion, so it is best to be specific on the invitation. To ensure formal attire, specify black tie or, for the highest level of dress, white tie. As this is a New Year's Eve party, more formal dress codes tend to be well received and the occasion is seen as a befitting opportunity to dress up to the nines. If the host is aware that some guests like to dress up, and others do not, 'black tie optional' is a diplomatic choice, so long evening gowns can be worn and cocktail dresses are also acceptable. If there is uncertainty as to which dress code to adopt, the cue is traditionally taken from the type of food being served and the style of decor – so that everything marries together to create an appropriate mood; for example, a sit-down meal would suit a formal dress code, whereas a buffet event may be better suited to a more relaxed dress code.

Deciding whether to invite children or not is an important part of the planning stage, as this may have a large effect on numbers. Arranging a group babysitter is one idea to ensure families can come and that the presence of children will not disrupt the evening. Unless the occasion is a quiet evening with family or



close friends, it is best to invite enough guests to fill the rooms where the party is being held; otherwise, the atmosphere can fall rather flat. Although, also bear in mind the number of guests that can be comfortably seated. Try greathire.com to hire stylish extra furnishings, such as chairs, stools and accessories.

THEMES AND DECORATIONS

Sleepy post-Christmas days are certainly not a time to be taking down the Christmas tree, hence, Julia Dowling, MD of luxury party planners, Snapdragon, offers judicious suggestions. "Most homes will have been wonderfully decorated for Christmas, so our advice would be to find creative ways to build on that. For example, transport guests into a ski chalet or replace Christmas table decorations with rosemary, ivy and bay leaf arrangements interspersed with scented candles smelling of fresh herbs." Dowling ►

ABOVE Decorate the dinner table using different styles of candleholders and tea lights to generate maximum drama. *Luxury tableware, lighting and decorative accessories all from Harlequin London*

RIGHT Serve canapés in smart platters in keeping with the party mood. *Pickle dish from La Classica Contura collection, £39.90, Villeroy & Boch*





ABOVE To recreate this sophisticated spectacle, Sally Hodge explains, "To accentuate a feature fireplace with an eye-catching balloon display, use one colour or a subtle blend of two or three shades, and place the balloons at different heights for maximum effect."

Gold foil balloons, from £7.50, Bubblegum Balloons

RIGHT Decorations in rich purples, iridescent greens, inky blues and splashes of gold instil an upscale mood and transports guests far from Christmas.

All accessories from John Lewis

recommends staying away from red colour schemes, and using a colour palette of green and white – also the favoured colour scheme of Selina Lake, interior stylist and author of new decorative style guide, *Winter Living*. She reveals, "This year I'm going for a cosy, rustic feel, with natural wood, green, white and metallic elements, along with plenty of faux furs draped over the chairs and a few sparklers stuck into desserts; ready to bring out at midnight."

For those who relish the opportunity to decorate the house with a very different colour scheme, emporiums An Angel at my Table and Anthropology offer characterful party decorations in an array of colours, from vibrant peacock tones to powder pink and blue. Interior designer, Katharine Pooley, provides inspiration for hosts who prefer an opulent decorative theme: "As well as candlelight and artfully draped foliage, I will be adding some playful lotus animals and mother-of-pearl platters on which to lay out nuts, sweets and dates."

To create an impressive feature, consider a lavish display of balloons. Sally Hodge, from Bubblegum Balloons, suggests, "If you're hosting a New Year's Eve dinner party, attach helium balloons with tassel tails to the backs of chairs for a striking table setting."

STYLISH TABLE

To set the scene for a special feast, Dowling instructs: "Aim for opulent, but uncluttered. Lots of wine glasses placed at each space setting builds anticipation." A rainbow of different coloured glasses is a wonderful decorative touch, as the colours twinkle like precious gems when lit in soft candlelight. Alternatively, Pooley



advocates, "Metallic detailing on classic white china is always my preference during the festive season. It is effortlessly timeless and can be easily mixed with different coloured flowers, table-mats and cloths."

FLORAL FLOURISH

Flowers are a pivotal aspect of any party's decorations. Joanna Rhodes, from florist Hayford and Rhodes, recommends that clients present florists with a mood board to collaborate creative ideas. To create an impressive entrance, Rhodes suggests framing the doorway with two oversized displays, which will lead guests into the party and excite them about the night ahead. Once everyone has arrived, the arrangements can be moved inside for maximum value. Rhodes advocates simple dramatic features, which have a greater impact than smaller designs. "New Year's Eve



is a celebration and your flowers need to reflect this; big statement flowers with larger-than-life personalities in bold contrasting colours could be just the look for the party of the year.” There are many scented British flowers available at this time of year. “An abundance of narcissi would look fabulous adorning a mantelpiece, whilst hellebores would form a stunning table runner.” For a more intimate dinner, Rhodes suggests deeper tonal colours and tightly arranged knots of flowers in bowls and goblets, positioned along the dinner table.

“For a truly luxurious look, go heavy on roses or amaryllis in deep jewelled tones.” Rhodes advises placing displays where the most time is spent, “Guests will naturally gravitate to the heart of the home, which is the kitchen, so adorn an island or bar with delicious flowers, surrounded with your finest glassware and pop the Champagne for instant atmosphere.” ■

TOP A good florist will be delighted to help customise floral decorations to the party theme. A beautiful wreath can be easily transported from the front door to adorn the serving area. *Flowers seen here by Jay Archer Floral Designs*
ABOVE Brightly coloured glasses never fail to instil a party mood. *Saint-Louis Twist glasses and tableware, Harlequin London*

FOOD AND DRINK TIPS

- Serve between four and six canapés per person, this will account for both those who will eat under and over the average amount.
- If serving a variety of canapés, assume each guest will try at least one of each type.
- Prepare cocktails in jugs ahead of time and store in the fridge, so you are not occupied preparing drinks when guests arrive.
- Assume two cocktails per person – if these are being served as drinks upon arrival. It is also wise to assume an absolute minimum of one drink per person for each subsequent hour afterwards, but most likely it will be more.
- A 0.75L bottle of Champagne serves six.
- Remember, it may pay to hire extra glasses from a wine shop or supermarket, to avoid trying to locate spare vessels when guests misplace their glasses and are eager for another enticing cocktail.
- For a wide selection of impressive New Year's Eve recipes, visit greatbritishchefs.com/collections/new-years-eve-recipes
- Serving petit fours with a cup of tea or coffee is a diplomatic way to signal to guests that it is the end of the evening.

A person wearing a grey sweater and patterned socks is holding a wooden bowl filled with a light-colored soup. The soup has a swirl of white cream on top. The background is a rustic wooden surface.

A feast FOR THE SENSES

Cosy up at home with these delicious recipes from Lizzie Kamenetzky's new book, perfect for a wintery starter, main and dessert

*“Strange to see
how a good dinner
and feasting
reconciles everyone”*

Samuel Pepys, English diarist

CELERIC AND PARSNIP VELOUTÉ

Serves 4

1 celeriac (about 500g), scrubbed
2 parsnips (about 350g), scrubbed
2 small onions, 1 halved and 1 finely
chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
5 fresh thyme sprigs
100g unsalted butter
100g cooked peeled chestnuts
100ml whole milk
2 tablespoons Madeira
Squeeze of lemon juice
Sea salt and ground black pepper
Double cream, to serve

- Peel the celeriac and parsnip (reserving the peel) and finely chop the flesh. Put the peel and 100g of each vegetable into a pan with the halved onion, the garlic and half the thyme. Add 1.2 litres of water and simmer gently for 30 minutes. Strain the stock.
- Heat the butter in a pan, add the finely chopped onion and fry for 10 minutes until soft. Add the remaining parsnip and celeriac, the chestnuts and the remaining thyme. Add the stock and milk and simmer for 20 minutes until the vegetables are tender.
- Strain, reserving the liquid and then whizz the solids in a blender until smooth (you will get a smoother soup this way than if you blend in the pan with a hand blender).
- Return the puréed vegetables to the pan through a sieve and add enough of the cooking liquid to form a rich velouté. Add the Madeira, a little squeeze of lemon and season to taste. Bring back to a simmer then serve with a good swirl of double cream.



ROCKY MOUNTAIN STEW

Serves 4-6

1kg skirt steak (bavette) or other
braising steak, cut into pieces
4 tablespoons plain flour, seasoned
Vegetable oil, to fry
500ml beef stock
1 teaspoon paprika
1 garlic clove, crushed
Pinch of sugar
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
1 bay leaf
400g potatoes, diced
1 large carrot, diced
300g baby onions or very small
shallots, peeled
Sea salt and ground black pepper

- Dust the beef all over with the seasoned flour. Heat a layer of oil in a large flameproof casserole dish and brown the beef all over in batches.
- Return all the beef to the pan and pour over the stock. Add the paprika, garlic, sugar, Worcestershire sauce and bay leaf. Cover and leave to simmer very gently for 2 hours.
- Add the diced potatoes, carrot, baby onions and a good splash of water, then simmer, partially covering the casserole dish with the lid, for a further 20 minutes – until the vegetables are tender and the meat falls apart when pushed with a spoon. Season to taste.
- Serve with creamy mashed potatoes or jacket potatoes. ▶



ORANGE CAKE WITH RUM DRIZZLE

Serves 6

1 large orange
1 lemon
100ml extra virgin olive oil
180g caster sugar
4 eggs
25g plain flour
150g ground almonds
2 teaspoons baking powder

For the drizzle:

10 tablespoons caster sugar
Freshly squeezed juice of 2 oranges
3 cloves
120ml rum

20cm loose-bottomed cake pan

- Put the whole orange and lemon in a pan and cover with water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 30 minutes, until soft. Drain and allow to cool.
- Halve the cooked fruit and remove the pips, then whizz them in a food processor until they form a purée.
- Preheat the oven to 180°C, then beat the oil, sugar and eggs together until light and fluffy. Fold in the flour, almonds and baking powder, then add the puréed fruit. Pour into the greased and lined cake pan.
- Bake for 45–50 minutes until golden and risen, and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.
- Meanwhile, make the drizzle. Melt the sugar with the orange juice in a small pan, then add the cloves, bring to the boil and bubble until it becomes syrupy.
- Add the rum to the mixture.

- Pierce the cake all over with a skewer and pour over half the drizzle whilst the cake is still warm.
- Allow to cool, then serve with the rest of the drizzle. ■

Recipes taken from
Winter Cabin
Cooking by Lizzie
Kamenetzky (published
by Ryland Peters &
Small, £19.99).

Photography by
Nassima Rothacker.

The book is available to readers of The
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The art of A HOUSEHOLD ANNUAL AUDIT

Passionate about quintessential English customs, our incognito columnist reminds us to do the best things in life in the most elegant fashion, always with a twinkle in her eye

BELOW RIGHT

Farrow & Ball have an ever-expanding range of tempting shades with names such as Mouse's Back and Clunch to evoke just the right mood.

Paint from £38 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball

January is the perfect time to take stock of one's life. I usually begin by making a short trip around the house to see what needs doing and then make appointments and fill in the calendar for the year.

It takes a bit of time and Mr M often says I am wishing my life away planning so far ahead into the future, but I think it makes perfect sense. January is a quiet time for many trades, so one does not have to spend hours hanging on the telephone or leaving messages.

Top of my list are the regular jobs one has to tackle; carpet cleaning, for example. I book in four appointments for the year, so the heavy traffic areas are cleaned once every three months. It really does pay when one lives with dogs and a husband who finds it impossible to remove his boots when he enters the drawing room.

Next on the list is the servicing of the oil appliances. I also book in the septic tank emptier (rather tastelessly promoted locally as being 'No 1 in the No 2 business') and the gutter cleaner, as well as the chimney sweep. Once all these dates are in my diary, I feel as if the new year has begun and I can turn my attention to what needs doing in the house.

I try to do things in increments, meaning we rarely have a huge expense unless we are going to be undertaking a large project. I do like everything to look well maintained as I become stressed when little jobs mount up for Mr M.

I go round the house with a notepad, listing all the jobs that need doing. Touching up paint is regularly needed here; one could imagine a house full of children on tricycles when one looks at the scuffs that accumulate on our walls. I have no idea where they come from, but can only imagine Mr M's gait is becoming ever less steady when he returns from an evening in the Dog and Duck.

In the boot room I keep tins of each paint colour we have used in the house, which makes this job easy.

It is one I actually rather enjoy doing myself if I have the time. Being able to restore walls to their former glory with a few strokes of the paintbrush is a wonderfully renewing feeling.

I also update my spreadsheet of trusted local tradesmen and women, deleting those who have moved away or have most recently produced less than satisfactory results. After each job is completed, I allocate a score for the person in question, with marks for punctuality, quality of workmanship, their rates and their tidiness in leaving the house as they found it. Poor Mr M rather worries he is on a list somewhere, with a rating based upon the same criteria. This is nonsense, of course – there are many more categories one needs to add when it comes to husbands.

When checking each room, I make sure the decoration is in order, check fabrics for wear and tear, as well as any marks that may need professional cleaning. I make sure tap washers do not need replacing, tiles resealing or mattresses replacing.

This is also the time of my annual de-cluttering. Anything that has not been used for a year gets assessed for future usefulness and either kept, stored or given away. This allows me to feel I am beginning the new year afresh.

I also check we are paying the correct amount for utilities and whether there are any new services available we might not be aware of. It is rather trying to hang on the telephone to customer services departments, but well worth it, as often there are savings or upgrades to be had. It was doing this ►



that got us faster broadband, something Mr M is grateful for every day. Apparently it was awfully annoying watching the cricket live on his laptop only to miss three wickets and an amusing run-out when coverage from Lord's was interrupted by a symbol that indicated the download was doing something called buffering.

It is important not to neglect the garden when carrying out one's household audit. Winter is a good time to plan for the spring, and outbuildings and sheds need as much attention as the main house. Shed roofs, for example, need to be kept in tip-top condition, so now is a good time to check for leaks. You will also need to ensure water is not coming in from the base. If it looks as if one might have trouble, then call in an expert. They can do all sorts of whizzy things with membranes, which will considerably improve longevity.

The man who came to revamp our shed last year stood with his hands on his hips. "All a shed needs is a good hat," he said, "and a good pair of boots." I thought this marvellous and it made me laugh for weeks. Poor Mr M became quite tired of this, so I did not tell him that the shed man also had the temerity to suggest I, too, would look pretty good in just a hat and boots. That, I fear, would have sent him over the edge.

Now is the time to plan large projects, too. Kitchen and bathroom companies will often have sales on, so if one is ready to begin fairly soon it is well worth seeing what bargains are on offer. If one is planning something for later in the year, it still pays to look at new lines being introduced now. One can sign up for email alerts and thus be notified when a chosen company is planning special offers.

Tear sheets and a notebook are invaluable for each project, and if one is involving an interior designer it is well worth making an appointment now as it is often a quieter time for them.

All in all, managing a house is rather like managing a husband. Success lies in regularly taking stock, keeping annoying niggles in check, ensuring any major issues are dealt with properly by qualified experts, and insisting on regular maintenance to ensure the heating and plumbing are in serviceable condition. ■

Do look out for The English Home February issue's 'Little Black Book of Resources' for more useful contacts.



LEFT A beautifully tidy desk with everything in its place always helps focus the mind.
Handcrafted Tambour Pencil Pot in walnut, £195, Linley



STRAIGHTEN UP

Get everything in order for the new year with these helpful resources

BOXING CLEVER

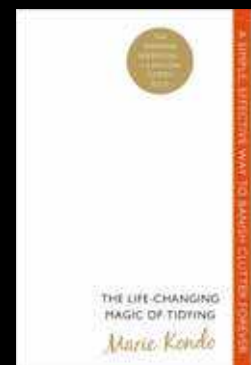
January is absolutely the time to get one's paperwork in order. A tidy desk really does equal a tidy mind. New files are a great incentive and I am rather loving the canvas range from The Holding Company. They come in a gorgeous neutral shade and have leather handles with a number of useful designs to choose from, including a letterbox, magazine files, a filing box and useful drawer chest, from £13. Visit the website to see the complete collection.
theholdingcompany.co.uk

CURTAIN CALL

If one is looking for a cleaning service for curtains, rugs, tapestries, carpets or a reupholstery service, take a look at Pilgrim Payne & Co. The company is used by HM The Queen's household, and is perfect for those stress-inducing jobs where one worries so much about quality of service and attention to detail. For more than 165 years, it has been working in some of the country's finest houses and is the only firm Mr M will trust, as he remembers them from his boyhood.
pilgrimpayne.co.uk

A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

If one needs to de-clutter before tackling a household audit, I thoroughly recommend *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying*. It is a godsend to those who find throwing things away a painful experience. Its author, Marie Kondo, has changed the lives of millions with this bestselling book, which somehow changes the way we think about clutter. Published in paperback by Vermillion, it is definitely worth reading.



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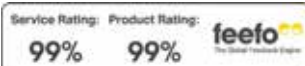
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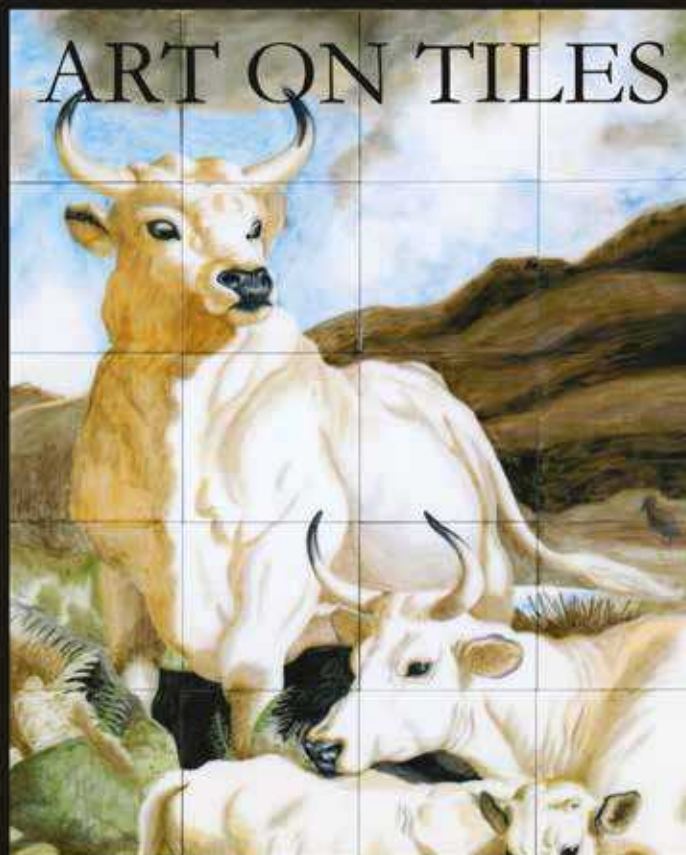
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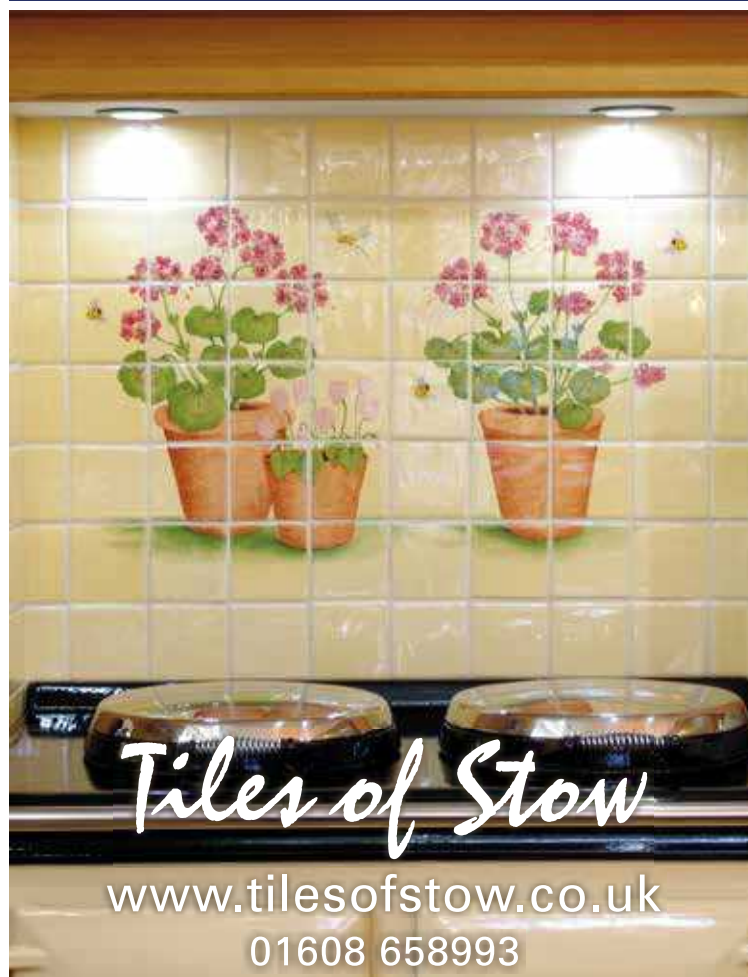


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Authentically ENGLISH

With an aptitude for recognising just the right product to ignite customers' interest at its cornerstone, David Seyfried continues to produce stylish furniture with wide appeal

Lord Herbert, director and founder of David Seyfried Ltd, started his career working in Southend salesrooms, including Phillips and Christie's, before setting up a small antiques shop in Fulham Road. "Whenever I bought a little stool it sold very quickly, and I thought 'I'll look into this' and I got some made. I went off to a chap in the East End and he said I'd have to buy ten, and I thought 'I'll never sell ten'."

Despite initial trepidations, Lord Herbert proceeded to commission ten stools with a Victorian leg and caster of his own design. To his delight, the stools did indeed sell. "I covered them in kilim rugs; I was one of the first people to do that, so that got publicity and the stools took over. People would come to the shop and not really look at the antiques, so I thought I'd try a chair and a sofa, and [the company was formed] purely from that."

Today, 30 years later, David Seyfried's elegant furniture is just as popular as ever, with a selection of traditional and more contemporary designs being produced by a team of skilled craftsmen. "It is a small set up, with six employees, but we're in control. The frame-maker is just up the road and will do special sizes. That's the other thing people come to me for: I don't charge extra for making something two inches deeper or three inches wider."

Adapting traditional designs, either to add his own twist or to incorporate more contemporary elements, is one of Lord Herbert's skills. "The first one I did was a Georgian sofa – I bought a Georgian chair in a saleroom and created something similar. The chair sold reasonably well, and then I stretched it into a sofa. The frame-maker had a few designs on his books, so I looked at those and then tweaked them a bit to achieve what I wanted."

Many more designs were added to the collection in the following years, with "old friends" selling just as well as contemporary options. "I am not trained as a designer, but I am quite good at proportion, and I think that's what it's all about." The result is a range of timeless furniture that both looks good and feels comfortable. ■

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM The pleasingly simple lines of the Georgian chair was one of David Seyfried's first designs. Since then it has been adapted and it is now available in a button-back design, too. £1,760. Blending traditional and more contemporary shapes and elements has resulted in a chic array of sofas and chairs. Side Cushion Sofa, £2,670. A skilled team works tirelessly to deliver items within six weeks of order.



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